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Families stay connected over time through the intergenerational transmission of legacies. Legacies help family members to articulate family identity, learn more about family history, and provide succeeding generations with information about family culture and ethnicity. This qualitative study examines how older mothers transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members through legacies and how ethnic histories influenced this process. Thirty older Armenian American mothers residing in California were interviewed. A life course perspective provides the overarching framework for analysis.

Participants described the legacies they received and those they planned to pass on to family members. Emphasis was given to those legacies that symbolized connection to family, underscored family cohesion, and accentuated Armenian cultural roots. Individual age, larger historical events, and the gendered construction of family life influenced both the receipt of legacies and those that were passed on to family members. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

Armenian families were forced to leave their native homeland. Because of these events, Armenian families passed few physical legacies on to family members. Legacies took on other forms such as stories, rituals, family gatherings, religious participation, cooking, and service to others.

Women viewed their legacies within the context of motherhood and worked to ensure that certain legacies would be valued and remembered by future generations. Shaped by age, generational position, and ethnic identity, women expressed variation in types of legacies and the ways they planned to share them with family members. Women reported tension when certain legacies lacked meaning for their children (in-law) and grandchildren due to the influences of assimilation, intermarriage, changes in family and paid work patterns, and the characteristics and interests of adult children. A focus on legacies provides a useful lens for understanding how families transmit family identity, culture, and ethnicity to succeeding generations.

Linking Generations:

The Family Legacies of Older Armenian Mothers

by

Margaret M. Manoogian

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Margaret M. Manoogian, Author

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DEDICATION

For the legacies I have received, I dedicate this work to my parents, Rita and Haig Manoogian; my Armenian grandparents, Satenig and Garabed Manoogian; and my German grandparents, Maria and Ludwig Helmprecht. For the legacies I wish to share, I dedicate this work to my children, Brin and Elinor Manoogian-O'Dell.

Linking Generations:
The Family Legacies of Older Armenian Mothers

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

We understand legacies, typically, to be those things received from ancestors or predecessors such as a bequest of personal property. Legacies, however, may be defined more broadly. Legacies involve at least two individuals, the person who passes on the legacy, the legator, and the person who receives the legacy, an heir (Kivnik, 1996). Legators determine what is important to pass on to others and how they want to be remembered, while heirs decide what is important to receive (Kane, 1996). Heirs have the opportunity, as well, to reshape received legacies or create new legacies within a generational context (Kivnick, 1996). Ultimately, the meaning of legacies, whether positive or negative, is in the hands of succeeding generations.

In families, a variety of legacies, both material and symbolic, may provide links between generations. The types and meanings of legacies in families, however, have received little scholarly attention. This study examined how older mothers transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members through legacies and the extent to which ethnic histories may influence this process. Pertinent literature, theoretical perspectives, and personal experiences shape this topic.

I was born into a family that embraced three cultures: the Armenian roots of my father, the German roots of my mother, and the American roots of a recently

adopted homeland. I have long been aware of how my family activities, entertainment choices, cuisine, and even household décor differed from those of our neighbors. As I grew older, I received many objects that were passed on to me by family members, particularly my German grandmother. The abundance of physical reminders of my German ancestors stands in bleak contrast to the lack of physical objects from the Armenian side of my family. The hardships my Armenian grandparents endured and their forced evacuation from their native homeland in the early part of the 20th century left them bereft not only of possessions but also of immediate family members who were killed in the events preceding and culminating in the Armenian Genocide of 1915. Having lost all of his relatives, my grandfather came to America with nothing. My grandmother was able to bring a few items into this country, only to lose them later in a fire. No valued items or family records exist previous to my grandparents' generation.

From the German side of my family, I received a tea service. Since the late 19th century, this heirloom has been given to the oldest daughter in each succeeding generation. Accompanying this service are a small piece of glass etched with an image of a young German man and a small card with writing in old German script. Supported through these smaller artifacts, this tea service tells a story. A young woman in service to the Lady of the German Castle of Sigmaringen received, as an engagement present, an ornate walnut hutch that housed the tea service. Although the fiancé died before the wedding could take place, the walnut hutch and tea service became cherished family possessions. The hutch no longer exists. The tea

service is intact, however, and was passed on to my great grandmother, then to my grandmother, and to my aunt. After my aunt's death, the tea service was given to me, the oldest daughter within my generation.

Although the tea service was commissioned by royalty as an original piece of work, it has neither a date nor other markings. Consequently, its value on the open market would be questionable. The symbolic worth to me, however, is significant. Although I doubt that I will ever use the tea service as it has been used in past generations, it represents a long line of hardworking German women who have passed its stories and family connections to their daughters and granddaughters. These women used it to share tea with others, ensured its cleanliness and safety, and valued it as part of our family story and as a vehicle for the transmission of our family culture across generations.

Researchers have begun to describe the ways that reflexive insights provide a framework for informing scholarly activities (Allen, 2000). The topic of my dissertation utilizes my personal experience of family process and acknowledges the ways that my views and values have shaped my research interests. In addition to my own personal experiences, I have observed and learned of possessions imbued with meaning in other families. For instance, Krieger (1996) wrote about her discussions with her mother concerning the inheritance of family silver. "From these conversations with my mother, I learned that, more than for its use in eating, and more than because of its value as a precious metal, family silver is a big deal

because it provides lessons in cleaning, sibling rivalry, childrearing, and proper behavior. It links the generations and makes people come home to claim it" (p. 69).

Symbolic meaning of items such as the family silver, may hold significant power in a family network. Family objects provide continuity in experiences, relationships, and values (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). The passing on of family possessions may severely disrupt sibling and parent-child relationships, as possessions symbolize whom the parents loved and respected (Lustbader, 1996). A nationally utilized and well received Extension Service program entitled "Who gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?" (University of Minnesota Extension Service, 1999) is an example of how the meanings surrounding particular family objects may influence inheritance patterns. Specific items, the memories and rituals that are attached to them, and the symbolic meanings they suggest, have significance within families.

Possessions are one form of legacy that may be passed across generations. Family legacies may also include such things as stories, photographs, specific rituals, or family activities. Because the literature is sparse in explaining how individuals transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members, this study was exploratory. Three theoretical perspectives helped to understand this process further. Building on Erikson's (1950) model of life span development, the passing on of certain legacies to younger generations may be motivated by generativity (Alexander, Rubinstein, Goodman, & Luborsky, 1991; Kotre, 1984; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992; Unruh, 1983). For instance, adults are culturally

generative when they pass on specific meanings and stories from one generation to the next (Kotre, 1984). Furthermore, adults share legacies within a particular sociohistorical context. A life course perspective acknowledges that individuals continue to be influenced by earlier life events in the timing of their transitions and the life paths they follow. For instance, this may be true for adults affected by significant family disruption and loss. Unique ethnic identities, additionally, influence family relationships and activities. Models of kin relationships in the United States, based on middle-class White experiences, cannot be generalized to all groups (Johnson, 1985). Ethnicity is visible in the customs, rituals, attitudes, and values of individuals and families and each ethnic group in the United States has a different story to tell (McAdoo, 1993). In this study, Armenian American women, specifically older mothers, were the focus. The family legacies that these women received as well as those things they chose to pass on to family members reflected their specific ethnic history and family experiences.

A gender perspective recognizes that women's activities and experiences are shaped by power inequities inherent in patriarchal structures. Having fewer opportunities of inheriting financial resources, Rosenfeld (1974) contended that women placed more emphasis on the nonmonetary legacies they received and intended to pass on to family members. Di Leonardo (1984) stressed that, although ethnic women had little power within patriarchal structures, women had great power in kin networks as they worked to preserve connections among family members. Bakalian (1993) suggested that Armenian American women, situated

within a patriarchal culture, assumed responsibilities for maintaining cultural solidarity and passing on cultural meanings to other family members. Examining the ways that women are placed within social structures, especially families, may help in understanding how women, older mothers in particular, shape and transmit family meanings, culture, and history to others.

In this qualitative study, my intent was to broaden understanding of the legacies in Armenian American families that are shared across generations. I conducted this research to learn how older mothers pass on those legacies received from parents and grandparents and, in turn, create and shape legacies of their own to pass on to family members. I approached this research with an understanding of the specific historical events, referred to as the Armenian Genocide, which culminated in the deaths and relocation of Armenian families during the late 19th and early 20th century. Since these events, Armenians have continued in their desire to have the Armenian Genocide officially acknowledged by Turkish and other international governments (Hovannisian, 1987). Therefore, I have chosen to capitalize any reference to the Armenian Genocide in this text.

My research questions were as follows:

1. How do older mothers transmit a sense of family meaning, history, and culture to family members? Do older mothers describe such things as cherished family possessions, stories, recipes, and photographs, and if so, how do they intend to pass them on to family members?

2. To what extent do unique ethnic histories influence older mother's activities regarding the transmission of family meaning, history, and culture to family members?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review that describes key theoretical perspectives and how they inform our understanding of the transmission of family meanings, history, and culture is outlined below. First, I describe life course, gender, and generativity theoretical perspectives that inform this study. A review of previous studies follows, beginning with pertinent research on the symbolic and instrumental nature of personal possessions for adult women and men. Specific literature on how cherished possessions and family stories are passed on to other family members also is addressed. To situate the sociohistorical context of many of the women in this study, I briefly describe the history of the Armenian people, immigration patterns to the United States, and women's roles within families. In conclusion, I synthesize the different aspects of the literature to demonstrate the importance of this study.

Theoretical Framework

Life Course

A life course perspective provides a useful foundation for understanding intergenerational relations and is the theoretical underpinning for this study. This perspective acknowledges that families are a collection of individuals with shared histories that function within changing social contexts (Bengtson & Allen, 1993). Emphasizing the synchronization of individual time, family time, and historical

time, a life course perspective reflects how society gives social and personal meaning to an individual's life (Hagestad, 1990). Families exhibit both change and continuity as their members create new adaptive behaviors and transmit persistent behaviors over time.

According to Hareven (1994), this life course perspective provides a developmental and historical framework for understanding how patterns within families are formed over the life course and carried into later years shaped by circumstances and cultural traditions. Specifically, historical events shape individual lives within specific cohorts. For instance, Elder (1974) found that not all families were equally devastated by the Depression and that individual and family time variations led to different consequences for working- and middle-class families and individuals.

A life course perspective also acknowledges that individuals continue to be influenced by earlier life events in the timing of their transitions and the life paths they follow. These earlier life events may also span generations. Although they may not have been directly involved in the Armenian Genocide that forced family members to relocate to the United States during the early part of the 20th century, the older Armenian American women in this study may feel the influence of these events across generations. Their experience of family culture and history may be shaped by the experiences parents or grandparents had during this historical period.

A life course perspective suggests that families may vary from one cultural context to the next and that specific cultural values may impact how families

construct meaning through their interactions and activities. Families are heterogeneous by virtue of the gender, ethnicity, race, or socioeconomic status of individual members. Comparative research utilizing a life course perspective may help researchers to understand how cultural traditions shape intergenerational relations, and how these cultural meanings shape specific family activities (Hareven, 1994).

Gender Perspective

Feminist scholars have articulated the ways in which women and men create and reinforce patterns of behavior based on particular perceptions and expectations of gender (Ferree, 1990; Thompson & Walker, 1989; Walker, 1999; West & Zimmerman, 1991). Gender is given meaning in the categorical construction of women's and men's roles, behaviors, and labor, expressed differentially in terms of power (Ferree, 1990). Being a woman or a man in society is not biologically driven, but rather is shaped by a " . . . lifelong process of situated behavior that reflects and reproduces a structure of differentiation and control in which men have material and ideological advantages" (Ferree, 1990, p. 870).

Individual experiences within the same family can be markedly different. For instance, who fills particular family roles, carries through activities, and makes certain decisions is influenced by gendered expectations and reinforced in daily interactions. Differentially placed within the social structure, women and men interact and experience family life as influenced by macrosociocultural contexts

(Osmond & Thorne, 1993; Thompson, 1993; Walker, 1999). Examining any component of family life, then, cannot happen without the acknowledgement of the broader context and the behaviors, activities, and expectations of how gender is created.

Women's activities and experiences are shaped by power inequities and injustices inherent in all patriarchal structures. Families represent only one of many social structures where gender hierarchies are created and reinforced. Families can be a place of opportunity and oppression as well as shape individual identity (Di Leonardo, 1984). For instance, gender constructions in families motivate particular kinship structures and cultural prescriptions based on obligations, ideological stances, and justifications for family activities (Ferree, 1990). The gender perspective provides a useful analytical framework for examining ethnic families and the role of older women in preserving and passing on family meanings (Osmond & Thorne, 1993). It is often the work of women that provides the anchor for the creation and transmission of ethnic identity. Armenian Americans value their families as a source of social ties, cultural traditions, and ethnic identification with certain important activities orchestrated by women (Bakalian, 1993). Di Leonardo (1984) found that Italian American men described important experiences of ethnic family life that were fostered by women.

Objects and relationships can have gendered meanings (Ferree, 1990). For instance, older women describe certain family possessions as reflecting specific family ties and relationships while men are less apt to give similar meanings to

these objects (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). How relationships with adult children are constructed and experienced may directly influence both the process and the designated recipient of certain inherited items. Utilizing a gender perspective may help to illuminate the gendered construction of family stories and other significant vehicles for transmitting family meanings.

Generativity

Erikson (1950) introduced the concept of generativity in his theory of human development across the lifespan. He proposed eight distinct stages of psychosocial development. In the seventh stage, generativity versus stagnation, Erikson (1950) contended that adults in midlife were psychologically ready to make a commitment to future generations antecedent to successful achievement of ego integrity. According to Erikson, midlife adults focus their concern for others, primarily, although not exclusively, through parenting.

In recent years, researchers have extended Erikson's theoretical model and explored generativity in adults through quantitative and qualitative methods. Kotre (1984) defined generativity as the " . . . desire to invest one's substance in forms of life and work that will outlive the self" (p. 10). Grounded in extensive, in-depth case studies of adults in mid to later life, Kotre (1984) outlined a broadened definition of generativity that was neither specific to a single stage of development nor to a single mode of expression. In Kotre's view, adults primarily express four types of generativity--biological, parental, technical, and cultural. In biological and

parental generativity, adults are generative, first through their physical ability to bear and nurture children and second, through their socialization of children. In the third type, technical generativity, adults express concern for future generations by teaching skills to others (e.g., apprentices or students). Finally, adults express cultural generativity by creating, refining, and preserving a culturally symbolic system to be passed on to younger generations. Thus, according to Kotre, adults are culturally generative when they pass on specific meanings from one generation to the next. For instance, the passing on of family stories and meanings by a grandmother to her grandson is an example of cultural generativity. The passing on of cherished possessions from one generation to the next could also be considered a form of cultural generativity as these items are imbued with meaning and often are accompanied by family stories.

Other theorists have defined the generative adult as having a concern for the well-being of younger and future generations (de St. Aubin & McAdams, 1995; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998). Adults express this concern through specific activities such as mentoring and shepherding others, contributing to the community, and creating and producing things that are focused on helping succeeding generations. Utilizing this overarching definition of generativity, McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) outlined a multifaceted generativity model for adults. In this model, individuals typically desire to be generative in their adult years, motivated to express concern for future generations by both societal demands and inner desires. This concern for future

generations, then, incorporates both commitment as well as action. Generative acts may include nurturing children, preserving the environment, enacting rituals, or passing on valued possessions or stories. Finally, adults use narration or the creation of a life story to give meaning to their lives and integrate their past, present and future selves. McAdams and de St. Aubin (1992) theorized that the construction of a personal narrative also included the creation of a generativity script wherein adults establish a plan for how legacies are passed on to future generations.

These more recent theoretical models of generativity address some of the criticisms typically focused on Erikson's model of development. Cohler, Hostetler, and Boxer (1998) identified conceptual and methodological issues with the construct. Defining generativity has been somewhat illusive. It remains unclear whether generativity is a personal attribute or a distinct developmental transition (McAdams, 1996). Recent theorists have pointed out that although generativity is loosely linked to midlife, it does not occur within primarily biologically, predetermined stages. For instance, within a restricted, biological definition of generativity, middle aged women may not be seen as generative because they are likely to have finished childbearing and active child rearing activities during Erikson's designated period of generativity (Leonard, 1999). In a reinterpretation of his own work, Erikson and his colleagues also recognized that later life generativity existed. They found that older adults expressed a "grand generativity" (p. 74) in later life that incorporated the ongoing nurturing and care that extended to

succeeding generations even after direct responsibilities for parenting were over (Erikson, Erikson, & Vinnick, 1986).

The status of parenthood as the defining foundation of generativity has been challenged and generativity has been redefined as both adult women and men without children have been seen to express generativity in their relationships with others (Alexander et al., 1991; Cohler et al., 1998; Rubinstein, 1996). Other studies have explored whether generativity was characteristic of individuals with varied histories, cultures, and personal circumstances. In their work with gay men, Cohler et al. (1998) found that generativity was a useful concept for their participants who felt off-time and off-course with respect to normative development and societal expectations. They felt, however, that utilizing the theoretical construct of generativity in conjunction with a life course theoretical perspective enabled a more inclusive accommodation of diverse adult developmental paths in their research.

Creating and Passing on Legacies

Creating a legacy involves more than establishing a will and designating heirs. Legacies are created as avenues of remembrance. Family possessions, stories, and other means of transmission may represent a generative legacy and allow for the memory of the individual to endure and "outlive the self" (Kotre, 1984). Family histories may be prepared for future generations (Kane, 1996). In some cases, legacies may be intentionally planned. Individuals review past achievements and

organize valued possessions. They reflect on the importance of past and current relationships and their life's work, determining those things that are meaningful and that have influenced their lives (Kane, 1996). How individuals and families are ultimately remembered, however, is the passage of meanings from teller to listener, from the person who shapes and passes on stories to the person who receives and understands them (Kotre, 1984; Manheimer, 1995).

Family possessions represent an avenue or vehicle for the transmission of family meanings, culture, and history. As particular items are passed to the next generation, they may be imbued with meaning and stories about family life. For instance, Rubinstein (1987) noted that several items cited by his participants had been in families for many generations and represented family continuity across time. Regarding these items, participants expressed a form of generative caregiving. Rubinstein (1987) explained that adults have a wealth of knowledge concerning certain objects including their history, records of needed repair, and proper means of bestowal. For adults, there may "be a sense that one is a custodian of sorts, caring for and preserving an object through time, rendering it and its story intact" (Rubinstein, 1987, p. 230).

Stories also represent a vehicle by which family meanings are conveyed to others. Family stories communicate family history and provide information about intergenerational relationships and family meanings (Kotkin & Zeitlin, 1983; Martin, Hagestad, & Diedrick, 1988; Stone, 1989). Some researchers have proposed that individuals integrate past experiences into identities through the

creation and passing on of a personal narrative (Kotre, 1984; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998). Others have suggested telling family stories to children allows for the construction of family meaning and identity (Fiese, Hooker, Kotary, Schwagler, & Rimmer, 1995).

Certain theorists have proposed motivations for the creation and passing on of legacies (Erikson, 1950; Levinson, 1978; Kotre, 1984; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992). Especially within a particular ethnic or cultural context, few empirical studies exist, however, on the transmission of family meanings, history, and culture through personal possessions (Rossi & Rossi, 1990) and family stories (Fiese et al., 1995).

The Meaning of Possessions

Researchers who have studied the role of personal possessions in adult lives have noted that these objects have both instrumental and symbolic functions. Kamptner (1989) suggested that adult possessions may be instrumental in that they allow individuals to control their environments, or meet specific goals or needs. For instance, feelings of security may be enhanced through the possession of photographs and religious items, or feelings of enjoyment may be enhanced through the possession of televisions and books. Possessions also function as symbols. Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) specifically outlined how possessions may act as a symbol of the self, immediate family, kin, or nonfamily members. For instance, participants indicated that jewelry symbolized the bond

between marital partners and family heirlooms symbolized the link between family generations.

Some researchers have observed that adults utilize possessions to maintain self-identity across the life span (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992; Rubinstein, 1987; Tobin, 1996). Erikson et al. (1986) observed that photographs were used by older adults as reminders of who they were in connection to other people. Others have suggested that possessions function as reminders of past experiences and relationships. For instance, valued photographs may provide a record of one's past and preserve past memories of interpersonal ties. Kamptner (1989) described how particular possessions represent an individual's sense of self especially noticeable with loss, such as change in residence or loss of a spouse in later life. Rubinstein (1987) found that individuals described objects as representative of personal accomplishments and traits, personal change through the lifespan, and valued work activities. For instance, one older participant emphasized the value of photographs that were taken specifically of him and that showed personal change and growth over time.

Possessions also symbolize links to others. In many studies, possessions that symbolized interpersonal ties were the most salient to individuals. Most valued possessions typically suggested a family history, a continuity with previous generations, and connection to others (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1989; Rubinstein, 1987; Stum, 1999; Tobin, 1996). Possessions that

were treasured during the lifetime of a parent or grandparent had special significance to family members (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Tobin, 1996). Stum (1999) found that adults often expressed regret when they had failed to take advantage of time with healthy family members to share stories and meanings that went with possessions. Krieger (1996) described her family silver as providing important family meanings as well as linking her to past generations.

Some meanings ascribed to cherished possessions are not interpersonal. Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that family members often described objects as cherished for the memories they evoked such as a special trip (see also Sherman, 1991). Certain possessions may also be treasured for their associations with how they were acquired such as a shopping trip to a special market (Taylor, 1981).

Almost any item can be invested with meaning (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Tobin, 1996). As indicated earlier, however, photographs are most often imbued with significance by older adults. Items such as photographs can become sanctification symbols for individuals who have lost loved ones (Unruh, 1983). Photographs can impart a sense of immortality to family members by representing the connections to descendents (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981). Tobin (1996) suggested that photos function as a reminder of past experiences but also, for some individuals, suggest a potential reunion with loved ones.

A wide variety of ordinary and mundane items besides photographs may convey meaning and become vehicles for remembering and memorializing others (Unruh, 1983). Stum (1999) described a young woman who identified a bookmark used by her grandmother meaning more than any financial inheritance she could have received. Rubinstein (1987) noted that a quilt hung in a bedroom represented a continuity of women seamstresses in one family. Similarly, a particular musical instrument played during college evoked memories of fun and enjoyable times for an older man (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981).

Two cross-sectional studies about possessions utilized participants from across the life course. Kamptner (1991) surveyed 577 individuals, ranging in age from 10 – 89 years, who were in good health and lived in the community. Instrumental meanings (i.e., utilitarian, activity, enjoyment, and intrinsic quality) associated with valued possessions declined significantly with age, while symbolic meanings associated with valued items possessions (e.g., memories, cultural-religious association, personal history) increased significantly with age. Kamptner (1991) analyzed her findings in relation to Erikson's psychosocial stages of identity development. The value individuals placed on particular possessions functioned similarly to Erikson's descriptions of tasks and challenges in different life stages. In Erikson's theoretical framework, adults established intimacy during early adulthood, focused on generativity in middle adulthood, and engaged in life review processes in later adulthood. Kamptner (1991) found that possessions functioned as markers of personal development and holders of past memories for those in late

adulthood. Older adults also utilized specific objects primarily as vehicles for reminiscence.

In another three-generation study of 82 families, Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) also found that younger participants valued possessions in terms of their active functions. Older participants valued possessions as records of past experiences, evidence of relationships to others, and means for life review. Adults in middle and late adulthood showed similarities in how they gave meaning to their possessions.

When gender was addressed in studies concerned with valued possessions, adult women and men differed in both the identification of and meanings given to possessions. Women were more likely not only to identify more valued possessions in general, but they also were more likely to describe symbolic meanings associating these possessions with close family members and other kin (Dittmar, 1992; Kamptner, 1991; Sherman, 1991; Wapner et al., 1990). For example, women described the clothes of a deceased parent or the necklace given by a grandparent. Men were more likely to value items that had more utilitarian meanings (Wapner et al., 1990), emphasizing activity and instrumental qualities (Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1991), as well as status (Dittmar, 1992). Such items as sports equipment, vehicles, and trophies were examples of items described by men.

Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that the types of possessions valued by women mirrored gendered patterns of family work within

families. For instance, when compared to men, women more often valued possessions that helped them to care for other people. Even with a large proportion of working women within their sample, Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) reported that women were more likely to value possessions that signified the traditional work of mothers such as cooking implements and textiles.

Researchers have also suggested that women's descriptions of personal possessions as symbols of relationship and connection and men's descriptions of personal possessions as activity related and functional reflect material expressions of gender identity. Dittmar (1992) outlined a two-dimensional representation of the meanings most often association with specific possessions. She found that women and men varied in the reported symbolic and functional meanings ascribed to personal possessions. On a functional-symbolic horizontal axis, women's responses were more likely to be symbolic and men's more likely to be functional. For instance, women more often associated sentimental, relational, and historical meanings with possessions, whereas men described more practical and active leisure meanings with possessions. As represented by a vertical axis depicting self- to other- orientation, women were more likely to prefer items oriented towards others. For instance, one participant stated, "I have surrounded myself with many special friends and I love looking at them all about my room. I love to be reminded of their physical presence in the form of photos" (Dittmar, 1992, p. 134).

Family Stories

Family stories express family identity, provide cohesiveness, and often showcase an older family member (Stone, 1988). Stories that endure typically feature a strong central figure and illustrate a major transition within family history such as immigration, lost fortunes, or natural disasters. (Kotkin & Zeitlin, 1983). Preserved and shared predominately by women, Stone (1989) suggested that family stories may provide messages about family organization and power. Stone indicated that ethnic families used stories to bolster family morale and encourage ethnic pride when faced with criticism and discrimination.

In his work on generativity, Kotre (1984) reported on life stories from four women and four men. One participant described his survival experience during the Armenian Genocide in 1915. Kotre used this story to outline the ways that "good" stories were passed on to others. In such stories, individuals selected elements of past experiences in order to create and convey meaningful stories. Powerful central figures were often described as acting well and doing memorable acts. Those stories that were meaningful included strong family themes that were easily understood by younger family members. After hearing the story of his Armenian grandfather's ordeal, for instance, one grandson remarked that he could endure anything after hearing of his grandfather's perseverance. Family members also cited family resiliency and strength as key family characteristics after hearing the grandfather's story.

Very few empirical studies focus on the transmission of family stories from one generation to the other (Fiese et al. 1995). Martin, Hagestad, and Diederick (1988), interested in the "inheritance" (p. 534) of stories in families, investigated whether generational differences existed in the reporting of family stories. Main characters, the longevity of the story over time, and underlying themes were also examined. Most of the 169 family stories collected focused on personal rather than historical events, although historical events, when mentioned, included wars, economic circumstances, and technological change. The stories typically portrayed male heroes, although 75% of the storytellers were women. Grandparents were often main characters. The analysis of story content revealed a gendered account, with men more often present in a work context, and women more often present in a family context. No generational differences existed as to who told stories. The type of stories and main characters showed generational similarities. The authors also found that family stories rarely existed beyond a few generations.

Fiese et al. (1995) examined the family stories of parents with young children. They were particularly interested in the prevalence of family storytelling, the content of the stories for different stages of parenthood (infant vs. preschool), and the similarities and differences of story content for wives and husbands. Storytelling was found to be a common activity reported among the 91 husbands and 97 wives participating in the study. Fathers were more apt to tell stories with stronger achievement orientations while women were more apt to tell stories with stronger affiliation orientations. The developmental life stage of the family, as well

as the gender and historical experiences of the parent were all important in the construction and telling of family stories. The authors suggested that family stories may provide one vehicle in the transmission of values to children.

Passing on Legacies

Older adults may express care for family members by passing on specific cherished items. They may also use certain objects as vehicles to pass on family meanings and stories. Older adults may distribute possessions to others as a way to preserve self-identity into the future. Deciding who should receive certain items can be shaped by issues of power, gender, and family relationships.

When a family member dies, a legacy is passed on to surviving family members (Rosenfeld, 1974). Rossi and Rossi (1990) have demonstrated that intergenerational care, affection, and intimacy persist across the life course. Through their examination of how older parents intended to pass on items to family members, they found that intergenerational solidarity persisted beyond the death of parents. Concern for children continued to exist after the parents' death through the passing on of significant items to a child or grandchild.

Adults may have other motivations for passing on family meanings, history, and culture through cherished possessions and family stories. Several researchers have suggested that the passing on of specific possessions is part of a generative legacy (Dittmar, 1989; Kamptner, 1991; Kane, 1996; Unruh, 1983). Leaving possessions to others may stem from a desire to leave a trace or mark of self that

becomes written into family history. Specifically, older adults may use possessions (Kane, 1996) and stories (Kotre, 1984; McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) as a way to position how they want to be remembered.

Unruh (1983) outlined three strategies that older adults undertake to ensure the preservation of identities for future generations. First, older adults solidified their identities by making sense of and selecting aspects of personal history for which they wished to be remembered. Second, they collected artifacts (personal possessions) that had special family meaning and represented key points in family history to convey specific meanings, stories, and aspects of significant personal identity to survivors. Finally, older adults used both formal means such as wills and testaments as well as informal means such as sharing stories while distributing possessions, as ways to communicate to survivors how they wanted to be remembered. Simply, Unruh (1983) found that dying people used material objects to create the kind of memories they desired to see live on in others.

The passing on of cherished possessions to others plays a role in preserving family history and stories. Stum (1999) surveyed older adults and found that the transfer of objects came from a desire to connect the past to future generations through personal and family histories, values, and representations of a lifetime of work. Cherished possessions and family stories may serve as vehicles for passing particular ethnic or cultural family meanings on to future generations (Kotre, 1984). Other researchers have suggested that the individuals may be motivated to pass on

cultural values and traditions (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1989; Rosenfeld, 1974).

Experiencing a holocaust or genocide may also spur generative acts. In her qualitative study of European-born, Jewish individuals, Kay (1998) found that survivors from concentration camps, when compared with refugees, were especially concerned with their stories and what their family members would make of them. Some chose to share stories with everyone, while others shielded younger family members from hearing them. Survivors were invested in children and work, and concerned with passing on their knowledge to others. The experience of the Holocaust, for many, became the consummate family story passed on to other generations. Kay (1998) also found that these individuals placed great value on material possessions attributed to their earlier losses.

When possessions are passed on to others, power can be expended as to how and who receives certain possessions. The intergenerational transfer of possessions through inheritance can enhance or destroy family continuity (Sussman, Cates, & Smith; 1970), can encourage some family issues to remain unresolved (Stum, 1999), and can punish and reward those who receive certain possessions (Lustbader, 1996). The passing of cherished possessions can be a very sensitive process primarily because the denial of personal and family immortality appears to be the core issue (Stum 1999). Inheritance issues can surpass all others in their power to disrupt sibling and parent-child relationships (Lustbader 1996).

Siblings who received certain items from older parents may feel that the choice involved in who gets what represented parent's love, respect, and trust (Kane, 1996; Lustbader, 1996).

Women may have a significant role to play in the passing on of cherished possessions. As suggested earlier, women described their cherished possessions more often in terms of the symbolic meanings they represent in terms of historical events, kin relationships, and connections to others. In his review of early inheritance patterns, Rosenfeld (1974) suggested that symbolic inheritance such as the passing of nonmonetary items became increasingly important to women who were excluded from the benefits of financial resources.

Women may also play a role in ensuring that family meanings, history, and culture are passed on to family members. Alexander et al. (1991) found that caring for future generations was central to older women's sense of well-being and that passing on specific cherished items was expressed as generativity. Gillis (1997) described historical change during the mid-nineteenth century where the home became viewed as a "status symbol and memory palace, the repository of all that united families mentally even when they were physically apart" (p. 75). During this time, furniture, silver, and other household objects became increasingly more important as possessions to be passed down the generations, a symbolic link connecting past and present generations. As Americans became more interested in preserving roots and kinship, Gillis (1997) suggested that the "symbolic estate" was established, preserved, and passed on to others through the work of women.

The importance of the mother-daughter relationship emerged in one study of cherished possessions and family meanings. Csikszentmihayli and Rochberg-Halton (1981) found that mothers passed on a meaning system related to possessions to their daughters and not their sons. Specifically, they found that mothers and daughters more often than mothers and sons identified similar kinds of valued objects and shared similar stories and meanings ascribed to these objects. Fathers were not active in passing on symbolic meanings ascribed to possessions to either daughters or sons.

The Armenian American Context

Up until the early part of the 20th century, Armenians lived as an ethnic minority population within the Ottoman Empire located in the northeast area of Asia Minor. Ancient Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its national religion in 301 A.D. (Takooshian, 1995) and its Christian identification highlighted a major difference when compared to others in the region. According to Mirak (1980, 1983), the location of the land, rich in natural and agricultural resources, rendered it vulnerable. Armenian history is replete with periodic sieges, subjugation, and discrimination.

After 1829, historic Armenia was divided among the Ottoman, Persian, and Russian empires. Within the Ottoman Empire, Armenians belonged to one of many separate communities or millets that relied on a single religious leader to act as representative to the Turkish government. In the 19th century, Armenians, aware of

nationalistic ideas in Europe, made great efforts to establish strong Armenian communities (Mirak, 1980). Interested in economic and political reform as well as cultural autonomy, strong Armenian political parties emerged. At the same time, the continued deterioration of the Ottoman Empire brought a decline in Armenian/Turkish relationships. During this period, Armenians suffered tremendous physical and personal losses. For instance, between 1894 - 1896, massacres initiated by the Turkish government have been estimated to have taken the lives of over 200-300,000 victims (Suny, 1999). Coupled with more massacres in 1909, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were deprived of their property and were forced to relocate or be killed (Mirak, 1980).

In the world arena, the Russian Revolution (1905) and the Young Turk Revolution (1908) encouraged Armenian expectations of equality, reform, and an independent homeland. During World War 1, however, these hopes diminished when the Ottoman and Russian Empires were in conflict. Claiming that Armenians were "untrustworthy, that they could offer aid and comfort to the enemy, and that they were in a state of imminent nationwide rebellion" (Hovannisian, 1987, p. 29), the Turkish government in 1915 made a concerted effort to eradicate the country of all Armenian citizens. Acknowledged as the first Genocide of the 20th century, Armenians were either deported en masse or killed. It has been estimated that between 1 - 1.5 million Armenians lost their lives during this period. An additional million survivors fled to other countries (Takooshian, 1995).

In 1918, Armenians formed a small independent republic in the aftermath of World War 1. Backed by President Woodrow Wilson, the Treaty of Sevres (1920) recommended the establishment of an independent Armenia within its historical lands. These hopes were vanquished, however, by both Turkish efforts and the lack of direct international support in the area. As a result, Armenia became incorporated within the Soviet Union. An independent Armenia was not reestablished until Armenians voted for independence in 1991 during the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Most Armenians who came to the United States during the early part of the 20th century were in some way affected by these historical events. By the end of World War 1, 90% of all Ottoman Armenians were gone from their historic homeland (Suny, 1999). Miller and Miller (1992) have suggested that women and children were likely to spend months on deportation routes and suffer for extended periods of time. Their interviews with survivors indicated that women witnessed the physical violence, starvation, and deaths of their children and other family members while men more often faced a quicker death. Survivor stories have documented the types of moral choices that parents, primarily mothers, had to make, including decisions regarding the survival of one child over another, the decision to give up a child to Turkish or Kurdish families, or the decision about whether families needed to stay together or separate.

Although survivors have varied widely in how they chose to share Genocide experiences (Miller & Miller, 1992), family members typically know some details

about the Genocide (Avakian, 2000; Suny, 1999). These experiences have influenced succeeding generations who have continued to share the grief and psychological distress of their family history (Bakalian, 1993; Keshgegian, 1995). The Armenian Genocide has become a legacy transmitted through family stories to other family members (Bakalian, 1993; Kotre, 1984).

Armenian Immigration to the United States

Research on the Armenian American experience in the United States is sparse. Bakalian (1993) described the immigration patterns of Armenians to America as consisting primarily of two waves of immigrants. The first wave consisted of individuals who came prior to the quota law of 1924 and through the end of World War II. The second wave of immigrants consisted of Armenians who entered the United States after World War II, beginning in the early 1950s, significantly increasing after 1965 and continuing to the present time.

The first wave of immigrants was primarily from Asia Minor and was in some way impacted by the Genocide and deportations occurring during that time. Most of these immigrants were uprooted and suffered family loss. They left behind their land, their ancestral homes, and their livelihoods. Generally, these first wave immigrants were a part of a broader immigration movement to the United States. Mostly, immigrants during this period experienced discrimination and were made to feel unwelcome.

First wave Armenian immigrants, when compared to second wave Armenian immigrants, were less likely to speak English and had lower educational and occupational skills. Neither did first wave immigrants have established Armenian American communities waiting for them. In contrast, more recent immigrants to the United States came from the Diaspora, countries wherein families lived after they were forced to leave their homeland. Second wave immigrants were more educated and more likely to have experienced urban life. They also had more access to Armenian American community resources.

As outlined by the description of immigration waves, Armenian American communities in the United States are comprised of the oldest of old survivors and their American born offspring, as well as Armenians from other parts of the world who brought the traditions and cultures of their new countries with them. Because of these differences in immigration patterns, Armenian American communities are diverse. For instance, New York and Massachusetts experienced the highest number of immigrants from the first wave of Armenians during 1899 - 1914 (Mirak, 1983). In contrast, a large proportion of Armenians to the United States after 1965 settled in the greater Los Angeles area (Bakalian, 1993).

Currently, California has the largest population of individuals of Armenian descent in the United States (Takooshian, 1995). Fresno County, located in the San Joaquin Valley of California, became a major destination of early Armenian Americans who were searching for agricultural opportunities. Moves to this area often represented a second upheaval from an initial settlement in the Eastern United

States (Mirak, 1983). In addition, other urban areas in California have concentrated populations of Armenian Americans including San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Early Armenian immigrants placed great importance on the establishment of Armenian religious institutions. Prior to immigration, Armenians experienced a strong church and state connection in the millet system of the Ottoman Empire. Missionary efforts, additionally, nurtured the formation of two newer Armenian churches of different denominations, the Armenian Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, dating back to the late 1500s, and the Armenian Protestant church, dating back to American missionary efforts in 1831 (Takooshian, 1995). With the highest number of Armenian immigrants affiliated with the Armenian Apostolic Church, Armenians established all three churches in America.

Although linked to the Armenian culture, these churches differ along denominational lines. The Armenian Apostolic Church is characterized by highly distinctive sacred rituals and is viewed as the primary source for the preservation of Armenian culture and identity. According to Bakalian (1993), this church served as a strong center for communal life in the Diaspora, aided in promoting ethnic identity, and addressed both the spiritual and social needs of immigrants. This church, additionally, has been the site of political disagreement among Armenian Americans. After the assassination of an Armenian bishop during Christmas Eve mass in 1933, a split in the Armenian Apostolic Church occurred (Takooshian, 1995). Armenian Americans, affiliated with the strong nationalistic Tashnag political party, disagreed with other Armenians over the acceptance of a soviet

Armenian republic. Nine Tashnag members were convicted of the assassination, resulting in the banishment of all Tashnags from the Armenian Apostolic Church. As a result, Armenian Americans established separate but similar Apostolic churches in America. Armenian immigrants at this time expressed political choices by attending certain churches (Bakalian, 1993).

Similar in ritual to their non-ethnic denominations, Armenian Protestant and Catholic churches place less importance on the preservation of Armenian culture and identity when compared to the Armenian Apostolic Church. Armenians who attend Protestant churches, for example, tend to place less emphasis on the retention of Armenian language, are typically less nationalistic in tenor, and have higher rates of intermarriage (Mirak, 1980). Within a generational context, attendance at all three churches among Armenian Americans, however, has declined as influenced by assimilation processes (Bakalian, 1993).

Because of the strong identification of the Armenian people as the first Christian religion in the world, the location of Armenian churches nation-wide is a good indicator of early Armenian immigration patterns (Bakalian, 1993). Presently, there are a total of 166 Armenian churches in existence in the United States that are dispersed in a variety of geographic locations (Uniarts Publishing, 2000). The San Francisco Bay Area in Northern California, the focus of this study, currently has six churches indicating a high number of Armenian families.

Armenian American Women

Armenian American women and men often express pride in their culture, seeking to maintain their distinctive language, religious traditions, music, art, and other customs. Their motivation may be especially strong in the face of the loss of homeland and the dispersion of individuals and family members across the world (Mirak, 1983; Takooshian, 1995). Because succeeding ethnic generations assimilate into the dominant American culture, family members who are less connected to ethnic heritages may turn to ritual as a mechanism for experiencing ethnicity (Pleck, 2000). From a generational perspective, Bakalian (1993) has described ethnic identification among younger Armenian Americans as progressing from being [italics added] Armenian to feeling [italics added] Armenian where individuals express pride and interest selectively while acting primarily American.

As noted by researchers (Alba, 1990; Gans, 1979), the outcome of this process, symbolic ethnicity, may be nurtured through ethnic cuisine, rituals, and celebrations, activities typically orchestrated by women (Alba, 1990). Mindel, Habenstein, and Wright (1988) indicated that traditional ethnic values and practices were found and preserved in everyday family experiences. In her study of Italian Americans, Di Leonardo (1984) identified the work that women did within families to preserve cultural identity and kin cohesion. Armenian American women have been observed to experience and display similar responsibilities for maintaining cultural solidarity and kin cohesion among family members (Bakalian, 1993; Keshgegian, 2000).

Although few writings have specifically focused on gender and families among Armenian Americans, Villa and Matossian's (1982) description of Armenian village life before 1914 illustrated the ways that Armenian women were expected to behave within families. Armenian women were described as the backbone of extended family relations, operating actively in the household with very limited freedom and access to roles outside of the household. Once a young Armenian woman married, increasing restrictions were evidenced in her requirement to act obediently and often in silence, subservient to older family members (e.g., the mother-in-law), and to men in general. In the United States, Armenian American women continued gendered patterns of family relationships, deferring to men, upholding strict moral codes, and operating within a strict patriarchal culture. In her discussions with second generation Armenian American women, Avakian (1983) found that her participants continued to defer to male family members. An interesting caveat to Avakian's (1983) qualitative study, however, is the description of Armenian American women. Participants generally attributed great strength but less power to women and attributed great power but less strength to men. Many of the women specifically described the great strength and survival skills of their mothers.

The contemporary Armenian American family continues to be characterized as close knit with frequent contact among kin (Bakalian, 1993; O'Grady, 1981). Current Armenian American women and men continue to value families as a site for ethnic identification and warm reconstructions of "Armenianess" (Bakalian,

1993, p. 442). Grandparents are especially honored and serve as critical cultural links between past and future generations (Bakalian, 1993).

Summary

Few studies examine the ways that older adults give meaning to and pass on family meanings, history, and culture. Additionally, few studies describe the vehicles by which these transmissions are made. With only a small number of exceptions (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Stum, 1999), even less is known about older mothers and how they pass on specific items and family stories to their kin.

Bakalian (1993) referred to Armenian Americans as a hidden minority. Little has been written concerning Armenian American families in the United States, especially women's roles in their families (A. Avakian, personal communication, April 21, 2000; A. Bakalian, personal communication, April 16, 2000). When contemplating the research that had been conducted with families in mid- to later life, Troll (1988) posed questions regarding the lack of attention focused on older women, particularly older mothers. When older mothers were studied, she noted that they were viewed primarily as dependent and frail care recipients, lacking agency. More recently, researchers, particularly those who examine gendered patterns within families, have suggested that older women continue a wide variety of family work activities in mid to later life. In a recent review, Walker (1999) outlined a variety of studies that have examined gender and

family relationships specific to kinship. Although showing that women are the primary agents in creating and maintaining kin relationships, Walker (1999) pointed out that an examination of the conditions that shape these activities was rarely performed. Clearly, understanding the social structure and cultural ideologies within which older Armenian American mothers transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members can make a useful contribution to the literature.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The research questions, research goals, and dearth of literature on the topic guided the selection of a qualitative research methodology for this study. Utilizing Marshall and Rossman's (1995) framework for developing qualitative research designs, the purpose of this study was exploratory. A qualitative approach allowed for a structured but open research method in which a great deal of information was generated and then explored systematically (Miles & Huberman, 1994). By identifying salient themes, patterns, and meanings that have relevance to older mothers, my intent was to identify new avenues for future research. A purposeful selection of participants allowed for in-depth field interviews that contained rich information and family experiences as directed by the research questions (Morse, 1998).

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used in conducting interviews on the legacies of older mothers. I describe the participants in the study and the activities implemented to recruit and interview the sample. Special issues concerning research within ethnic populations and issues of reflexivity and reciprocity are discussed. Finally, I outline how the data were analyzed.

Participants

Sample Criteria

Researchers have suggested that women place emphasis on family items that signify kin connections (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981) and are often responsible for the activities that create and sustain family cultural identity (Di Leonardo, 1984). To understand better how women plan to pass on family meanings, history, and culture to others, older mothers with at least two living adult children were sampled.

Because this study concerned the intergenerational transmission of meaning from older mothers to current and future family members, the women were from the omega generation (Hagestad, 1982), representative of the oldest living generation within their families. Due to the emphasis on generational placement rather than chronological age, the ages of the women were expected to vary between 55 - 90 years. The range of ages could then be analyzed from a life course perspective with respect to individual transitions within the context of historical time. The choice of position within a generation of a family rather than chronological age as a criterion stemmed from the research questions. As outlined by Rossi and Rossi (1990), however, chronological age helped identify the historical period during which specific participant developmental stages occurred. It was useful to know participants' ages during key Armenian political events and whether their families were situated in established ethnic communities as

influenced by time of immigration. In addition, it was important to know the ages at which the women experienced other historical events as well as life course transitions such as marriage and grandparenthood. Elder (1974) pointed out that the Depression produced varying and different consequences for family members, depending on individual and family time variations. The number, type, and meaning of things in families, for instance, may be influenced by such individual and sociohistorical experiences.

Women who were within two generations of immigration to the United States were targeted. In her study of Italian Americans in California, Johnson (1985) established a four generation criterion for her nonethnic sample, allowing for near completion of assimilation and acculturation processes. This study's criterion of two generations from immigration was established in order to interview those women who were more likely to be close to the immigration experience, ethnically identified as Armenian, and married to Armenians.

Depending on place of birth and time of family immigration to the United States, older Armenian American women may have limited ability to talk in English. I am unable to talk fluently in Armenian. To gain rich descriptions from participants, all women in this study were required to speak English.

Determining the site for this study involved the following components: (a) access to and entry into a population of interest; (b) availability of certain types of people, organizations, and structures; and (c) potential to build rapport with participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Attention to include a sample with

reasonable variation among the people being studied was also considered (Dobbert, 1982). To achieve these ends, the women in the sample were recruited from the San Francisco Bay Area in Northern California. This area was familiar to me, encompassed a large and highly diverse population, and included a well-defined Armenian American community.

The selection of California as the residence of the women in this study also reflected Armenian immigration patterns. California has the largest population of individuals of Armenian descent in the western United States. The total Armenian American population in the United States has been estimated at 700,000 (Takooshian, 1995). Approximately 500,000 Armenians reside in California with the largest concentrations in the cities of Glendale, Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco (Vartanian, 2000). When compared to the more recent immigration of Armenians to the Los Angeles area, other regions of California have particularly high numbers of first wave immigrants and their families (Mirak, 1983). Another indicator of Armenian American communities has been the establishment of Armenian Apostolic, Armenian Protestant, and Armenian Catholic churches. Currently, there are a total of 166 Armenian churches in existence in the United States. Northern California, primarily the urban San Francisco Bay Area, has six churches indicating a high number of Armenian families (Uniarts Advertising, 2000).

Description of the Sample

The sample totaled 30 women who self-identified as Armenian American. The ages of the women varied between 59 and 91 years with an average age of 76 years. Most of the women in the sample were married (n = 18). Unmarried women were either widowed (n = 8) or divorced (n = 4). Nineteen women were born in the United States and the remaining 11 women were born in other countries. With the exception of 3 women originally born in Turkey who were first generation immigrants, 27 women were within one generation of immigration to the United States. All of the women in this sample had parents who were forced to leave their homes and settle in new countries.

Participants had at least two adult children with a range of two to five children. Fifteen of the women had adult children who were married to non-Armenians only, 5 women had children married to Armenians only, and 10 women had adult children married to both Armenians and non-Armenians. Annual income levels varied ranging from $10,000 – $19,999 to $100,000 or more. Half the sample (n = 15) had continuously worked outside of the home and had retired. A few women (n = 2) were still working for pay full-time. Eight women exhibited discontinuous work histories either working after marital disruptions (n = 3), or working discontinuously before children were born or after children were older (n = 5). A small number of women (n = 5) never worked outside of the home. The high number of employed women in this sample reflected immigrant roots. These women came from families that fled their home country. Women who described

high socioeconomic levels for families prior to the Genocide reported that their families had few financial resources initially and had to "start again." Both women and men, in many cases, needed to work for financial reasons.

As children, 16 women reported having grandparents, typically a grandmother, with 14 women having grandparents living in their home or in close proximity during childhood. Five women received primary care from grandmothers when participants were young girls because both parents worked outside of the home. Table 1 summarizes the important characteristics of the participants in this study.

Table 1

Participant Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Age		
50 – 59	2	6.7
60 – 69	3	10.0
70 – 79	14	46.7
80 – 89	10	33.3
≥ 90	1	3.3
Marital status		
Married	18	60.0

(table continues)

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Widowed	8	26.7
Divorced	4	13.3
Place of birth		
United States	19	63.3
Outside of United States	11	36.7
Annual income[a]		
$10,000 – $19,000	4	13.3
$20,000 -$29,000	4	13.3
$30,000 - $39,000	4	13.3
$40,000 - $49,000	4	13.3
$50,000 - $75,000	2	6.7
$75,000 - $100,000	3	10.0
$100,000 or more	8	26.7
Number of adult children		
2	19	63.3
3	7	23.3
4	2	6.6
5	2	6.6
Marriages of participant children		
Married only Armenians	5	16.7

(table continues)

Characteristic	Frequency	%
Married only non-Armenians	15	50.0
Married Armenians and non-Armenians	10	33.3
Grandparental status		
Are grandmothers	26	86.7
Are not grandmothers	4	13.3

Note. N = 30 women. [a]One woman declined to state income.

Recruitment

The selection of participants for this study involved obtaining access to a very specific ethnic population. Due to the cohesiveness and size of the Armenian American community in California, I implemented purposive sampling methods. For this study, both key informant and snowball sampling methodologies were utilized. First, I identified key informants in the San Francisco Bay Area who were Armenian American and had ongoing connection to and knowledge of other Armenian American women in the area. These key Armenian American informants included two social service directors, a writer, a church organist, a community volunteer, and three local business women and men.

My first strategy, as suggested by my key informants, targeted Armenian churches as the most logical source for recruiting older women. These churches typically are the center for Armenian community activities, attracting a wide variety of adults interested in maintaining strong ties to their Armenian heritage

(Bakalian, 1993). Each church in the study area was identified. A phone call was made to discover the names of and contact information for church administrative staff and women's fellowship group leaders. Key church administrators were then contacted by mail. Letters of introduction describing the study solicited help in recruitment of the sample (See Appendix A) and were sent prior to a planned California trip to collect data. Telephone calls were made to church administrative staff two weeks after mailing the letters. In these telephone conversations, I identified myself and referred to the introduction letter and my study's purpose. I asked for help in identifying and recruiting potential participants who met my criteria.

Of the six churches identified in the area, one was no longer in existence. In four churches, the administrative assistant was my initial contact and was aware of the study due to the introduction letter. In the remaining church, contact was made directly with the minister. Church administrative staff were cooperative in suggesting activities where older women were present, outlining specific strategies for recruitment, and giving names of potential participants. As an outcome of these contacts, I had the opportunity to participate in a number of church activities. Over the course of one month (four Sundays), I attended four different church services. In one church, I was introduced during the service and a description of my study was presented. In all churches, I attended social hours and was introduced to older women. I participated in two church activities where I had the opportunity to meet older Armenian American women and establish rapport. These included an all-day

cooking event and dinner preparation for a church bingo fundraiser. Once I explained my study purpose and received approval from some key church women, I was able to identify a number of women for the study. Fourteen women affiliated with Armenian churches agreed to participate in the study.

Concurrent with the recruitment strategy outlined above, I also asked key informants in the area to provide help in identifying potential study participants. Predominately, these key informants were older Armenian American women and men who have lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for a long time. In many cases, I have developed rapport and trust with these individuals through both family and Armenian cultural activities. Most of these individuals knew additional older women who fit my sample criteria. In many cases, key informants made initial contact with potential participants before I made contact by phone. Nine women referred by key informants participated in this study.

During July, the annual Armenian Olympics occurs in a small community in the East Bay region of California. Youth and adults of Armenian descent participate in a wide variety of athletic events. Older Armenian American women, typically grandmothers, attend this event to watch family members and socialize with other Armenians. I was invited to attend this event and was introduced on the field as a past participant. One of the event coordinators personally introduced me to a variety of women who either fit my study criteria or had mothers who might participate. Through the contacts made at this event, I identified four women who agreed to participate.

Finally, I utilized a snowball sampling method by asking study participants for additional names of older women. Three additional women, recruited through this method, agreed to be interviewed for this study. In all, of the 49 names that were originally generated during the recruitment process, 30 agreed to participate, 6 did not meet the study criteria, and 13 declined to be interviewed, typically due to schedule conflicts.

In general, once I gained access to particular groups and received sanction from certain women within the Armenian American community, the recruitment process proceeded quickly. Because of the general cohesiveness of the Armenian American community in that area, I found that many women were aware of my study before I made contact with them. I also found that my own qualifications needed to be established before agreement to participate was granted. The women typically asked questions related to my own ethnic roots, the birthplace of my grandparents, my father, my interest in Armenian families, and my educational goals. Once participants had a better understanding of the study and of me, they were more willing to participate.

After individuals expressed interest in participating, I ascertained if the participant fit the sample criteria. If she was eligible, I described the study's procedures. I also addressed issues of informed consent and confidentiality. Each woman was told that her participation involved one interview in a location of her choice and at a time that was convenient for her. I described the type of questions that were asked and explained that the interview would last approximately 1.5 to 2

hours. After answering any questions she had, I determined if the participant was still interested in being interviewed. If needed, I offered to call at a later time or to send additional information. Once commitment to participate was obtained, I scheduled a time, date, and location for the interview. An informed consent form found in Appendix B was given to the participant at the time of the interview.

Procedures

Two types of data were collected during the interviews. A semistructured interview protocol based on the study research questions guided the conversations with each woman. Additional probes, unique to each woman's story, were added as appropriate. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. These transcripts as well as field notes constituted the qualitative data utilized in this study. In addition, each woman was asked to complete a participant profile in order to gain participant descriptions.

Interviews

Interviews took place in participant homes and lasted between 1.5 to 3.5 hours depending on each participant's level of energy and willingness to talk. A semistructured, open-ended interview protocol was used. The protocol can be reviewed in Appendix C. Each participant was asked first to fill out a short participant profile form regarding general family demographics. After this was completed, participants were asked to describe their family's history. In many cases, these historical narratives lasted at least 20 minutes; two of the oldest

participants talked for 90 minutes on this question alone. The women were asked, additionally, some general questions to help uncover significant family meanings, stories, and objects designated as important to transmit to other family members. The importance of generational ethnic family identification was also addressed. Interviews were conducted like informal conversations where each woman had the opportunity to frame and structure her responses. Each interview was punctuated by emotion as women shared past family history, especially regarding parents and family experiences of Genocide. The women were informed that the tape recorder could be turned off at any time if desired. Several participants asked that the tape recorder be paused during some point in the interview. Typically, these requests concerned the need to take a break, eat refreshments, move to another room, or to show photographs. In a few cases, women wanted time to regain composure. In two interviews, other family members were present as requested by the participants. In one instance, I was asked to interview an older husband, a 90-year-old Genocide survivor, after I was finished interviewing his wife. A participant's adult daughter was present in the other interview. At every interview, I was offered refreshments and often expected to stay for a meal. Each participant appeared relaxed and eager for conversation, with the exception of one woman who was chronically ill.

All interviews were audiotaped. Immediately after the interview, other pertinent observations were recorded in the field notes such as the setting and the informant, the tone and ease of the interview, and any other insights I had (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

A verbatim transcription was made after the interviews were completed. Because of issues of reciprocity, I wanted to compensate the women in some way for the their participation. First, each woman was offered a summary of the study once completed. In some cases, women wanted copies of tapes, which I also sent to them as requested. Second, small donations were made on behalf of the participants to The Armenian Tree Project, an organization that helps support economic activities in Armenia. As part of this donation, each woman had a tree planted in her honor. Each participant learned of the donation in the thank you cards sent following the interviews.

Developing Rapport and Trust with Participants

As outlined by other feminist researchers, I anticipated the experience of this study to be a process wherein participants were active partners (Cook & Fonow, 1986; Reinharz, 1992). I expected the interviews to be interactive, with the potential for development of connection between us (Ribbens, 1989). As a woman, a feminist daughter of an Armenian father and German mother, and a second generation Armenian American, I brought a gendered understanding of family process and ethnic sensitivity to this study. I also knew that no single person could know or represent every cultural aspect or subtlety of an ethnic population (Henderson, 1994). I expected to see similarities among the women as well as great variability.

With all of the women participants, I attempted to develop a sense of trust. Initially, I anticipated some tension between me as the researcher and the Armenian American women participants. Historically anchored to the loss of Armenian families and homeland, great pressure is exerted sometimes among Armenians to retain the culture through limiting intermarriage and encouraging language acquisition among younger generations. I am the product of an intermarriage, have married a non-Armenian, and I speak little Armenian. The Armenian culture is patriarchal and the role of women within Armenian families, especially in older cohorts may be restrictive. I have often felt uncomfortable at Armenian cultural activities where strong gender and power issues are present. At the same time, I wondered if my Armenian heritage and name would help the Armenian American participants feel more comfortable in sharing their stories with me.

In my interviewing experiences, I found only a few initial issues concerning my sanction as a member of the Armenian American ethnic community. At one church gathering, I overheard a conversation among some older women where they were discussing my physical appearance and whether I was an "Odar" (non-Armenian) or "Hye" (Armenian) due to my fair complexion. Most of the women were quite curious about my own family history and questioned me extensively about both my Armenian and German heritage. In many of the households, books devoted to World War II heroes and athletes of Armenian descent were present. The description of my uncle's participation in WWII and my own earlier involvement in athletics helped to develop credibility and trust among many of the

women. A few women with strong feelings regarding intermarriage expressed their disappointment that my mother was not Armenian and that my Armenian language skills were limited. In most cases, however, these issues were minor.

My experiences and constructed reality as well as those of the participants influenced and shaped the nature of our relationship and ensuing discourse. As the researcher for this project, I was critically aware of my own ethnicity and my family history of loss and forced relocation. By undertaking this study, I anticipated that I would not only learn more about other Armenian American families, but also more about my own family. As feminist researchers have addressed issues of reflexivity (Allen & Walker, 1992; Cook & Fonow, 1986), I was critically aware of my role and subjective position as researcher throughout the course of this study. As I listened to the voices of these Armenian American women, I understood more fully my own grandparents' stories and the experiences of my father. Due to my ethnicity, my connection with these women allowed for intimate and expressive conversation. Their stories shaped both my conversations with them and the analysis I undertook after our interviews were completed. I was aware of the potential for relationship with each participant. I reevaluated my role as the researcher frequently during data collection. I also found that many of the women's stories were painful, difficult to hear, and emotionally draining. I continuously appraised my contributions to the research process and ensured that a rigorous research methodology was employed. Through my experience of the research

process, however, I acknowledge the many ways in which each woman's story personally forged a new understanding of my own family legacies.

In almost every instance, the women treated me warmly. They embraced me, gave me gifts, and issued future invitations to their homes. Although my age is similar to that of their adult children, some of the women expressed their satisfaction that they were helping a "young Armenian girl to finish her education." In most interviews, as best as I could determine, I received candid answers to the questions I posed.

Confidentiality

Due to the cohesiveness of the Armenian American community in Northern California, I took great care in ensuring confidentiality to the women participating in this study. Informed consent forms were discussed at the beginning of each interview and each woman willingly participated in the study. Tapes and transcripts were kept locked. Many of the women wanted to know who the other participants in the study were, so great attention was made to keep all participant names confidential. I also found that many of the women knew of other participants' involvement through their own personal networks. If brought up in conversations, I would repeat confidentiality concerns. With all of these attempts at confidentiality, however, it was inevitable for some participants to have discussed their participation with each other. For these reasons and for concern of participant identification by other Armenian American readers of this study, in addition to

assigning pseudonyms, I have consciously made minor changes to all participant descriptions. Table 2 lists the pseudonyms and key demographic characteristics of each participant.

Table 2

Description of Participants

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Place of birth	Years in U.S.	Adult children	Marital status
Carol	59	United States		2	Divorced
Jasmine	59	Syria	49	2	Married
Sonia	63	Palestine	44	2	Married
Anoush	66	Lebanon	40	2	Married
Anahit	68	Lebanon	41	2	Divorced
Armenoui	72	Syria	30	3	Married
Louise	72	United States		4	Married
Ellen	73	United States		5	Married
Madeline	73	United States		2	Married
Zabel	73	China	52	2	Married
Ana	74	Turkey	11	3	Married
Barbara	74	United States		2	Married
Martha	74	United States		2	Divorced
Sofia	75	United States		3	Married

(table continues)

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Place of birth	Years in U.S.	Adult children	Marital status
Betty	76	United States		2	Widowed
Doris	77	United States		2	Married
Eva	78	United States		2	Divorced
Hasmik	78	Greece	45	2	Married
Rose	78	United States		2	Married
Dora	80	Egypt	24	3	Widowed
Lily	80	United States		2	Married
Lois	80	United States		2	Married
Arlene	80	United States		3	Widowed
Armine	81	Turkey	20	4	Married
Diane	81	United States		3	Widowed
Jacquelyn	81	United States		2	Married
Shirley	83	United States		3	Widowed
Alice	87	United States		2	Widowed
Seda	87	Turkey	24	4	Widowed
Melane	91	United States		3	Widowed

Note. Some identifying information slightly altered for confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began immediately following the completion of all interviews. Data included the participant profile form, interview transcripts, and

field notes. The analysis of the interviews and field notes entailed a process of induction, utilizing a grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The actual coding of the data occurred as suggested by Lofland and Lofland (1995) and Berg (1995). After the interviews were transcribed and field notes were in order, I reviewed them repeatedly. I initially coded information by key words and phrases. In addition to general ideas generated from the literature, coding schemes emerged from the data. For instance, how the Genocide experience was shared with family members and later incorporated into family narratives emerged as critical issues shaping subsequent family behaviors and activities. Within this first step, I focused on any instance mentioned by participants of ways that they transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members. I also coded any mention of specific vehicles of transmission such as possessions, photographs, family stories, and other means of sharing family history and culture. Instances where older mothers indicated either a process or a designated recipient for certain items were also coded. Additionally, references to ethnicity were coded.

My initial coding efforts helped me to label, separate, and organize the data. A more focused coding strategy followed in which I developed subcategories within initial codes and ensured that the codes adequately described the data. For instance, the significance of family Genocide experiences clearly emerged from the data. Specific subcodes were developed to address how and when these stories were told and the meanings attributed to them by participants. Overarching themes and key concepts were then identified.

To manage the large volume of data generated by the interviews and field notes, a computerized software program developed specifically for qualitative analysis, Winmax, was utilized. Advantages of using such software included the ability to code and retrieve large amounts of data generated by qualitative interviews more easily.

CHAPTER 4: LEGACIES RECEIVED FROM FAMILIES

This study focused on the legacies of older Armenian American mothers and the intergenerational transmission of family meanings and ethnic identity. All of the women in this study were from families that migrated from their home country of Turkey and shared the historical experience of the Armenian Genocide. These experiences played a crucial role in the complex process of transmitting both family legacies and ethnic identity. For instance, children and grandchildren born after the Genocide have found their ethnic identity to be mediated through the Genocide experience (Avakian, 2000) and have felt heavy responsibility to ensure ethnic survival (Bakalian, 1993). These historical events shaped the type as well as the meaning of legacies received by Armenian family members. At the same time, the Armenian Genocide has continued to shape future legacies created and disseminated to family members in succeeding generations. For this study, a life course perspective provided a powerful lens for understanding how the experiences of the Armenian Genocide were interwoven with immigration, assimilation, and family processes (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Hareven, 1994).

The process of creating, shaping, and passing on family legacies cannot be addressed without addressing multiple generations. The women in this study were the active link between the family legacies received from previous generations and those they had passed or planned to pass on to future generations. Before addressing the legacies that older Armenian mothers shared with family members,

then, it is critical to identify first the type and meaning of those legacies participants reported receiving from parents and grandparents. This chapter focuses on the family legacies received by participants. To illustrate the ways that participants learned of Genocide experiences and received family legacies, I begin the chapter by describing three women who represent the Armenian American women in this study. To protect participant identities, I constructed composites with characteristics from a number of women. I organize this chapter around the following broad themes: (a) the legacy of Genocide and family stories, (b) possessions as legacies, and (c) rituals and activities as legacies.

Three Armenian Mothers and their Family Legacies

The women in this sample described their family experiences of Genocide and the ways that these events shaped their ethnic identities and the types of legacies they received from family members. Although composites, the following three women represent the varied experiences of the women in this sample.

Azniv

Azniv was born in Beirut, Lebanon to parents who had fled conditions in Turkey during the time of the Armenian Genocide. Although her parents, grandmother, and two older siblings made it safely out of the country, Azniv's maternal grandfather and two uncles were killed prior to 1915. Azniv grew up in a tight-knit family with five siblings. Her parents spent many hours with their

children teaching them about Armenian history and culture. Azniv described Sunday evenings when her family would gather to share stories, sing Armenian songs, and learn Armenian history. She emphasized how these gatherings encouraged ethnic pride and highlighted the importance of Armenian traditions and values.

Azniv had one cherished family photograph of her mother's family that was brought to Lebanon by her grandmother. Although she was not told every detail, Azniv was well aware of her family's Genocide experiences and could talk of them at great length. Azniv was able to share a number of family stories, as well, that featured her maternal grandfather as an important figure in family history. Azniv reported that she was currently in the process of writing her parents' and grandmother's stories of Genocide survival.

Flora

Born to a working-class family in Chicago, Flora was one of four children and the youngest daughter. Her mother and father were Genocide survivors. Although she grew up in a predominantly Armenian neighborhood, school district lines determined her attendance in a school with very few other Armenians. In her descriptions of her childhood, Flora emphasized that she considered herself to be "somewhat of a rebel" in comparison to her older sister. She experienced conflict with her parents who established strict rules regarding her conduct as a young

Armenian girl. She described her involvement in a wide variety of both Armenian and American activities when young.

Flora knew many details about her family's Genocide experiences but emphasized her parents' reticence in sharing these stories with Flora and her siblings. Not wanting to bring up painful memories, Flora described how she refrained from asking about her parents' experiences as well. She knew of the Genocide experiences of other Armenian families by overhearing them at Armenian picnics and other gatherings. Flora expressed sadness that she knew little about her family history and had no family possessions that existed previous to the Genocide.

Audrey

Born in the United States, Audrey grew up in a small family with one sister. Both of her parents worked in a family-owned grocery store near her home. The family lived across the street from an American Protestant church and Audrey began attending Sunday school there when she was six years old. She characterized her childhood as poor but expressed strong feelings about her mother whom she described as "forward-thinking" and "kind to everyone." Her father, a Genocide survivor, refrained from talking about his experiences with Audrey and her sister.

Audrey was never told about her family Genocide experiences. She reported that her father did not want to talk about the Genocide because of his desire to focus on his new American life. Because her family resided in an area where only a

few Armenian families lived, Audrey knew little about other family Genocide experiences. As a consequence, Audrey was unable to relate much about her father's family history and knew little about the Armenian Genocide in general. Although she prepared Armenian dishes for special occasions, Audrey felt that she was primarily American and did little in the way of Armenian traditions and rituals.

The Legacy of Genocide and Family Stories

The Armenian Genocide has shaped the behaviors and activities of many generations of Armenians. In the context of loss, Armenian families put great emphasis on specific legacies as they passed them on to their family members. The narrative of the Genocide experience shaped into a family story has become an important legacy within these families. These stories define family beliefs and anchor family identity, they provide cohesiveness and a sense of belonging, and they exhibit strong messages about survival and ethnic resilience in the face of adversity (Stone, 1988). The meaning of this story differs, however, depending on whether family members were killed, if and to whom these stories were shared, and the method by which family members learned stories.

Family Experiences of Genocide

The events that took place during the early part of the 20th century touched every woman in this study. Their route to California differed, however, depending on the type of loss experienced in families and dispersal after leaving Turkey.

Although the interview protocol questions did not specifically focus on family loss, most women described these experiences at the beginning of their interviews. They used the Genocide as a way to structure their conversations. Many women expressed sadness and cried during the interview. Some women told specific, detailed stories while others were unsure and sketchy in their knowledge of family history. Family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were identified as Genocide victims. In all, 24 of the 30 women reported the loss of significant family members. From losing the love of a grandparent to the futile exercise of family genealogy, they mourned these family losses.

The women shared painful stories of trauma and survival. For instance, Eva described her mother's forced march into the desert with other women, older persons, and children.

> My mother was born in Adana and she was married. And before she was married during the 1890s, she went though that Turkish Genocide in Adana. They were killing, burning and killing. She survived that. She survived, I think, in 1905 also. There was another rage. And then around 1915, after she was married, her husband was taken. And with a child, she was in the desert . . . She was on the March, day and night, through rain, through the mud, living in tents. It's a wonder that she survived. It's a wonder that she didn't lose her mind. And she lost her child, too.

In their review of family history, participants described their mothers' Genocide experiences most often. Miller and Miller (1992) suggested that women survivors were more likely to have spent time on deportation routes. Hasmik outlined her mother's story of survival as an orphan and her subsequent forced participation on a desert march. "My mother was, she lost all of her family. Mother didn't have one

person, not one person! She was all by herself. With some older ladies, they had a march. I don't know where from or to. But mother was the only one in the family left." Hasmik continued that her father lost his first wife and children as well as his mother in the Genocide. Hasmik mourned the fact that she had very little knowledge of any women in her family. "I don't know no one. No grandmothers, no aunts, no one! We didn't have any survivors that were women during the massacre. Only my mother like I said."

Some women knew specific details about how their family members had died. When describing her family history, Alice began with the story of her mother. "My mother came when she was 15 and by the time she reached America, all of her family was killed by Turks. Have you read that book about many a hill to climb? My relatives are all in that book. See how they burned the brothers, tied them to a tree. How they tied her father behind the horses and dragged him until . . . . She doesn't know what happened to her sisters. She had three sisters. So when she came to America, she heard from them no more."

Fortunate to have a surviving grandmother who raised her while her mother worked, Sofia knew about her family's experiences. She continued to be haunted by this story of her grandmother's survival.

> She saw her husband and her brothers; they were taken from their home. The Turks herded them up and they took all these men and they took them to an area some distance. And, they, the women, of course, knew that they were going to be killed. And they had a pit over there and they had thrown them all in there and whatever, they shot them or whatever. And from what I understand . . . they saw a kind of vapor over this area. Like a rising vapor.

> And my grandmother said these were the souls of these men. Their souls were rising.

Although participants mentioned their father's experiences less frequently and with less detail, many fathers were also survivors of the Genocide. Rose described her father's experiences. "He had two sisters. But they, he didn't see them after he left home. They all died in the Genocide. His parents, his father, his sisters, a lot of relatives." When Rose was asked to elaborate on her father's experiences, she was unable to recall any details. Although Dora also had heard little about her father's experiences, she learned more of his story from other survivors.

> My father lost all of his family. None. My grandfather, my grandmother, his brother, his sisters . . . they were killed but one girl. One young girl, was taken by a Turk. When her brother saw this, he said he can't stand this anymore. His father died, his mother died, and his sister was taken by a Turk. He threw himself into the river and he killed himself. That is what we heard.

Some of the women knew stories about other family members that they heard either from their parents or from family members themselves. Betty's father lost all of his family in the Genocide except one aunt.

> My aunt, it was my great aunt. She escaped with her one son. And she would tell us how when they're walking, trying to get out of the country, all the children behind. They're dropping dead and all. And they never had anything to eat. And she said it was terrible. She said, "We used to suck the blood on the streets so we could have some liquid in us." And I remember her telling me that story and I'm the one that heard it from her.

Not all of the women in the study reported loss of family members during the Genocide. Six women came from families who escaped prior to the Genocide

without physical losses. For some, better economic opportunities and the desire to keep young men from entering the Turkish militia motivated emigration. Anoush suggested that her family was aware of rising tensions in the area. "They knew the dangers. They knew there were going to be dangers, so they felt at the time."

Some families who remained in Turkey bribed Turkish officials to ensure survival. Three women described their fathers' skills in using money and connections to keep their families safe. Armenoui stated that her family experienced less hardship because her " . . . father was working with the captain. Of course, they went through a lot of hardships, things like that, but no death." Seda, whose immediate family fled Turkey intact, stressed her father's ability to avoid danger. "But many times, I remember, they would come and knock on our door. Tomorrow, you are going to be deported to the desert! And then my father went to the men he knew, the Turkish officials."

Although the families of three women did not experience the Genocide at the same time as the other women in this study, they were forced to flee from Turkey to Lebanon with their families when they were children. Two of the women, Seda and Ana, were old enough to recall some memories of their flight. Seda was the most descriptive as she told of her family's escape out of Turkey.

> It was evening that the cart came, a horse driven cart came, like the trucks. They were putting the mattresses on the truck and I was crying. "Mother, put my dolls, put my dolls, I want my dolls." They were handmade. My aunt used to make them. Then we got in the cart. There was another cart. It took us, we wanted to flee to Aleppo, Syria . . . . our family were divided into two and the other families were divided into two. If one cart was caught by the Turks, the other cart could flee. We were thinking like that.

> It was night and of course, there was no electricity. And we started going. We started going. After awhile, the moon was on the horizon and there was no electricity . . . . I was sitting at the back. There were rails. It was open. The mattresses, we were sitting on the mattresses. And the old lady before me said, "Do you want to change your place? I am not comfortable." I said, "Okay, Grandma." I went to the front and she came to my seat. After awhile, the horses got mad. The drivers could not control. So it came to happen that our cart overturned and that lady died instantly and the railing, the iron came to her neck, and she died instantly! And I was hanged from my foot with a rope . . . my head down, hands down, head down. I was just like this. There was a ditch, I remember. I was seven years old. Then my aunt was with me, not my mother. She was in my father's cart. She cried, "She is dying, Seda is dying! Come help. She is dying!"

Seda showed me the deep scar on her upper right leg and told how her family members quickly attempted to stop the bleeding. She finally added, "When I tell that story, I still feel the pain."

Ana, also born in Turkey, shared stories about family adversity in Turkey. Because of the geographic location of her home in Turkey, her family was not involved in the earlier Genocide events. Ana did describe her flight from Turkey after her father's death from illness, however. She concluded: "We just left the key on the door without any penny or any goods. Just our clothes as refugees."

Armine described a similar story about her family's forced departure from Turkey. Because she was only a young child when they left, her story derived from what her family has told her more than from her actual memories. After their initial deportation, some Armenian families desired to return to their homes and recover the past ways of life. Armine's family left Turkey in 1915, returned, and left permanently four years later.

> They left the house. They left everything. And when they were there, word came that English people were in Turkey and they can go back. So, 1919, they went back to their houses. Our people, their house was not destroyed it seems. So they went back to their house. As I said, they were very rich. My grandparents were very rich. And then after the English and French came, and they did not want Turks in NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]. So they said, we have to leave. They couldn't bring many goods with them. Just money. That's all.

Transmission of Genocide Stories

Kotre (1994) suggested that family stories are legacies shaped and passed from the teller to the listener. Generative stories in this study depended on the women as critical listeners. Knowledge of family Genocide stories was determined first by access to information. Of those 24 women whose families lost members during the Genocide, only 10 women reported hearing detailed descriptions of these losses directly from parents. Nine women reported never hearing directly of the Genocide experiences of their parents and other family members. An additional 5 women indicated that only a few minimal details were shared.

Hearing stories directly. Women who knew about family experiences of Genocide typically heard them directly from their parents. In some families, these stories were told often and at certain times. For instance, Hasmik described her family's evening ritual of closing the shop, gathering for a meal, and sharing stories. "Our parents would sit in the evenings and talk." During those evenings, Hasmik learned Armenian songs, read from the Bible, and heard family tales.

Likewise, Dora seemed incredulous that other families would not share these stories with their children. "Not to share? I don't know why! I always told them. Even to my grandchildren, I told them!" In other families, the events of the Armenian Genocide were told but infrequently. Some women reported hearing the stories only a few times because of the obvious pain and emotional stress the telling caused parents.

Proximity to the atrocities may have influenced the telling of these stories. Parents escaped harm due to the timing of their departure from Turkey or separation from kin. Consequently, because they had less exposure to the events that other family members endured, their stories may have been easier to tell. Betty suggested that her father was able to talk about his experiences of family loss because he was removed from it. "Don't forget, he was here in the United States, so he didn't know details. He just knew that they were all gone. He didn't know a lot." Stories told by parents who were removed from the Genocide, however, were often brief because they had limited information. Parents who did not experience any family loss also appeared to be more apt to tell stories. Armenoui stated that her grandmother would tell her stories of the Genocide, however, "since we didn't go through it, we just heard the stories. If you go through it . . . it's different."

In their descriptions, the women related the different ways that parents shared Genocide stories. Participants indicated that the meanings attached to these stories varied depending on how parents shared them. As suggested, some parents shared their stories frequently. They used them as a way to memorialize lost family

members and to create a cultural awareness of suffering among Armenians. Other parents shared their painful family stories but also emphasized certain moral perspectives they wanted children to understand. For instance Sonia told how her father often shared his Genocide experiences with his children. "Our dad shared. But he would always tell us that we should not hate the Turks. Even though they were so mean and everything. He didn't want us to hate them. I remember that." Sofia also described moral messages delivered by her grandmother. "She would ask that God would forgive them. I mean, how can you, when your loved one's been taken and killed, how can you have any kind of positive thought in your mind?"

Some parents seemed willing to share stories with their children emphasizing the happy and fun memories they had as well. Carol explained how her mother relayed stories to her. "Even with living here and everything, she seemed to focus more on the happy, the funny things that happened, which was good. As time went on, I think they talked less and less about it. Every once in a while, though, they'd remember something."

Among parents who shared their painful stories, there were attempts to protect children from hearing some of the more brutal details of their experiences. Lois felt that she did not know her family stories because "the past is hard for little youngsters." Carol recalled how her mother would motion to her father to keep quiet about stories because "I was a little girl." Arlene described how her father sought to protect his wife and his children from learning about family losses. "He got word that his mother-in-law, father-in-law, and two brothers-in-law had been

killed in the massacre and he never told his wife. Not for many, many years. He just thought the shock would be too great for her and for us."

Families where parents were silent. Nine of the women described parents as silent. Most justified their parents' silence in similar ways. "They just didn't want us to know what they went through. Why not? I didn't know anything! It was so bad that they didn't want me to know." Another woman reported: "They wouldn't talk about it. See, that was the thing. This is what I am so sorry. We didn't question them ever!" Doris did recollect questioning her parents but stated that she failed to receive any answers. "They would never talk to me about the massacre. When I would question Mom, she would say, in Armenian. She would tell me, 'You don't have to know about it.'"

Survivors of the Genocide often responded to their experiences by avoiding and repressing them, refraining from sharing with others. Unable to talk to family members and others, Miller and Miller (1993) found that many Armenian survivors shared their experiences for the first time during research interviews. Participants in this study also expressed understanding of parents' silence. Arlene elaborated: "The only story I knew was the massacre from my maternal grandmother's side. I knew my father, I think, had lost a brother in the massacre but he didn't really talk about it. And I think as I look at other Armenian families that were there, the losses during the massacres, they don't really discuss them. I think it's too painful." Another woman justified her father's silence by relating it to war veterans. "My

father didn't tell too much. I think because it was so, like, just like we talk about now. Like people that go off to war, WWII or the Vietnam War. Those boys, I have a nephew that went to Vietnam. They don't like to talk about it. And my father I guess had the same thing." Finally, Ana stated that she felt her mother was incapable of sharing her stories with her children. "She couldn't. She was very depressed."

A few women felt that parents were silent because of a conscious choice to focus on life in their new home country. As Lois said about her parents, they emphasized how important it was to look forward rather than to dwell on the past: "We all have our holocaust, you know. And I know my parents would say, they never, they didn't discuss it. They thought it was not germane for living right now. We were just so grateful to be here and they'd like that to come across. But you know, live a straight life, work hard, and you know, you'll be . . . you're all right." Louise made similar comments: "It wasn't so much that they wanted to keep it a secret I don't think . . . . We are in this country. This is painful and we are starting a new life. I don't know it for sure but I suspect that was it."

Because these women were children at the time, they were less apt to push for information. To probe their parents' experiences with questions seemed out of the question given their deference to parental authority and the emotional obstacles they perceived. "I think if I had asked direct questions, I would have gotten answers. But the folks just never really talked about it."

Another potential reason for the silence that prevailed in some homes was the loss of grandparents during the Genocide. Women who reported having grandmothers or grandfathers who survived and who lived in close proximity to them as children were more likely to hear Genocide stories. Sixteen women reported having at least one grandparent who was able to leave Turkey although two indicated that their grandparents were geographically distant. Some of the women reported hearing their most detailed stories directly from grandparents. Those women who lost grandparents also lost critical links to past family history and stories. In their interviews, the women underscored this loss of grandparents and their connection to the past. These losses also occurred within a culture where grandparents were especially revered (Bakalian, 1993).

Hearing stories in other ways. Because 27 women were born outside of Turkey, they typically learned of Genocide experiences while growing up in other countries. Balakian (1997) described the intergenerational transmission of trauma [italics added] that occurred in his family and is evident as well in Holocaust survivors and their families (Hass, 1990). As in his family, many Armenian parents and grandparents were unable to relate the horrible experiences they endured to their family members directly. If not told directly, as young children, the women had others ways of hearing their parents' stories. Four of the women recalled the nighttime terrors experienced by their mothers. Eva shared this memory about her mother. "You know what she did when I was really young? I guess, I had to have

been seven or eight to know. My mother would wake up with like a nightmare and shock-like . . . . I would hear she would wake up in the middle of the night, like screaming, because it would come to her." Other women could see physical reminders of the Genocide on the bodies of their parents. One woman talked of the scars on her mother's back. Another women described how her father would share his stories with her. "He would tell me and he showed me his scars. He had little scars on his legs."

Some women learned of the magnitude of their parents' experiences by observing specific behaviors. Alice shared that she was closer to her father than to her mother because her mother cried most of the time, grieving for her lost parents and siblings. Arlene realized that her grandmother probably experienced some form of post-traumatic stress.

> My grandmother was 71 when she died but it seemed to me as a very young girl that she was, I'd say, a depressed person . . . . I used to play cards with her and play games with her but I'd see this feeling of, just this kind of underlying sadness and I had to relate it to the fact that this devastating thing had happened to her in her life and really [she] had never gotten over it. Today, maybe you would go for counseling or you read or . . . . every generation has a benefit over the generation previous to it. But they never had anything like that and I, it just, it just must have eaten away at her. That's losing your whole family.

Visiting friends and family during the evenings and weekends was a common practice among Armenian families when the women were young. Many women learned of their parents' stories by overhearing them during these social events. Rose explained her experiences at these gatherings.

> Now when we were growing up that's all the folks would talk about. They would all, had just recently come to that area, and the trials and tribulations. You know that's all they would talk about. Where did you end up? How did you get here? Which town are you from? Which orphanage did you end up with? Which roads did you take? You know, they went through a lot and we grew up listening to that . . . we would overhear it mostly.

In fact, many of the women described how Genocide experiences were discussed all around them. Martha explained, "We were aware of it because so many people were around us. Yes, we knew people that had all gone through this . . . . You sort of, I can't say you took it for granted, but it was what you lived with."

Whether a family experienced direct Genocide loss was not always predictive of Genocide stories becoming part of a family's legacy. The six women who reported no family experiences of loss, heard and related Genocide stories from family friends and acquaintances because of their close proximity to other Armenian families. In this study, only four women were raised outside of strong ethnic Armenian communities. In close-knit communities, children were exposed to a greater circle of Armenian adults and children who may have experienced the Genocide directly.

Knowing or not knowing family experiences of Genocide. Most Armenians are aware that something horrific occurred during the Genocide, although they are not always clear on the details or motivations for such acts (Suny, 1999). Women who heard stories directly tended to recount more details about their relatives as well as family circumstances in the "Old Country." They portrayed both a broad as

well as an intimate understanding of the Genocide and their family experiences. Stories that expressed the pain and suffering of Genocide remained with participants over time. Sofia described herself as a family historian who made great efforts to keep papers, record pertinent family facts, and ensure that family history would be transmitted. The stories she heard about her mother's survival have become part of a larger narrative that she tells about her family. "Oh, my mother shared, but she didn't tell me all the details of the horror that she experienced. She never divulged that to me until after she was dead and my father told me. And I said, I wish he had not done that because it's haunted me, really haunted me! (she cries)" Jasmine added: "I'd heard those stories. I cried. They've cried, I've cried with them. Little children, you know? It was very sad, that's why right at the beginning I told you it hasn't been a very happy life. I grew upwith them." Anahit expressed the pain she has experienced in knowing these stories and her attempt to forget them. "Myself, I don't know much about and I didn't want to know much about it, to tell you the truth . . . it upset me terribly, the stories. I didn't want to hear. I knew that they suffered. My heart goes out but I am the kind, I lose my sleep. I can't read books like that. I suffer and I go, why should I cause it? I know they suffered." Women who heard detailed Genocide stories, then, had various responses. Although Sofia was haunted by her family's experiences, she was encouraged to record the details for future generations. Anahit has felt the burden of these stories as they influenced her personal well-being, however, and has attempted to forget them.

When women were not told the stories of the Genocide, they expressed how this led to other losses. For instance, many of the women had difficulty conveying family history and appeared frustrated that their facts did not seem clear or accurate chronologically. It appeared that parents who were unable to share little with their children also cut off talk about lost family members in other ways. Grandparents were often not discussed and early childhood memories were not mentioned. Consequently, many of the women knew little about their families and they regretted their lack of knowledge. Eva emphasized this point. "My father? I knew that they had a really good family. His family, in his part of Turkey, was very close and had lots of relatives. When I hear from other people what their family was like, 'Oh your grandmother was wonderful, oh you look like your other grandmother.' All that stuff. But I really know very little." Diane commented that her father "never told us too much about his life. He told us a little bit. They put him in prison for a while and Dad escaped. I don't know. And then he came to the United States, sort of through from the east to California."

Consistently, there were differences among those women who heard stories from parents and those who did not. Knowledge of family history and connection to previous generations were two differences as outlined above. Women in families where Genocide stories were not told and who lived outside of strong ethnic communities appeared to be more assimilated and valued less the importance of the Armenian Genocide as a family story.

Family Stories and their Meanings

Participants reported a variety of family stories that they remembered and discussed in the interview. The stories that were identified most frequently described family experiences of the Genocide and resettlement in new countries. Participants emphasized story messages and meanings as they have shaped their sense of family and personal identity. Women highlighted stories that focused on survival, resiliency, and strength as well as pain and trauma. Family stories conveyed the importance of family kinship and cohesion. These stories also emphasized important family values such as a strong work ethic, ethnic and family pride, and service to others.

Because of the historical events that shaped Armenian family experiences, women expressed the importance of family legacies that affirmed family identity and connections. Armine emphasized this point when discussing her mother's family stories. "She used to tell about her college life, about her life with all sisters-in-laws living together. They (parents) left their goods but their moral, their ethical, their religious . . . their values. They had brought them and have given them to us." Armenian families could bring stories and create a sense of family across generations, even when forced to leave everything else behind.

Some women used Genocide stories to describe a parent's strong will and ability to endure great trauma. Sofia emphasized what she has learned and understood as a consequence of hearing the Genocide stories of her family. "Knowing the struggles that our people have gone through over the generations and

centuries and survived has made me feel stronger and I know who I am." She stressed how knowing her family stories was her family's legacy. "I'm glad I know in some ways 'cause it's important, it's a legacy. It is something that I've, I don't know, I feel stronger knowing it. My mother went through a lot and with her guts; maybe that gene has passed on to my children." Carol also described the meaning these family stories of survival held for her. "I never forgot where I came from or what my parents went through, I mean. Never to this day."

Women were well aware of the sacrifices that family members had made and their strength in living through the experiences of their time. As expressed by other children of survivors, some of the women felt they were special because their parents survived and gave them life (Hass, 1990). Through their stories, children viewed their families as resilient and strong, yet vulnerable. As described by adult children of Holocaust survivors, a few women shared how grandparents and parents were overprotective, fearful of others, and emotionally disconnected (Feinstadt & Finkelman, 1998). These instances were few, however. Most women, like Ana, placed great value on these stories of survival and described how they shaped both personal and family identity. "Sure the stories . . . the information about my culture, about their lives, the ancestors lives, how sacrificial they had been, what they did for our assistance. In every way, what they did intellectually, spiritually, morally was in them [stories]."

Not only Genocide stories were identified as important family stories illustrating parental strength. Many women shared how their mother's stories

showed strength in a variety of situations. The women and men in Anoush's parents' church in Lebanon were separated during worship. During a special visit from a priest, the women sat upstairs while the men sat downstairs with the honored guest. Anoush's mother, unhappy with this segregation, chose to stand among the men and refused to leave. "They had no choice but to bring the chairs and all the ladies walked in. She stood there the whole time to make sure that these ladies were not going to be shoved up there because she made so much noise. After that, there was no such thing as men or [italics added] women at that church. Things did change. She was a very strong woman." Sofia shared a story about her grandmother's life in Turkey that has become an important family legacy of self-reliance in the face of adversity:

> Her brother came to the house and he said, "Sister, are you in need of anything? Do you need any food? Do you need anything? Can I help you?" Because my grandfather apparently had gone to another town, trying to start a business or something but he was always a failure . . . . so my grandmother said to him, "No Brother, we are just fine. We're fine. Don't worry about us." So after he left, my father says, he got very angry with his mother. He said, "Why did you tell him that? We need food. We're hungry in the house." And she said to him. "Son, he can only help me so much. He helps me today, he helps me tomorrow. He can't help me forever. Why put the burden on him?"

The stories told of family events and gatherings in the Old Country emphasized family cohesion and togetherness. A strong sense of family among Armenians is a common theme in scholarly work and personal narratives (Bakalian, 1993; O'Grady, 1981; Pattie, 1995). Some of the women described stories about gatherings with family and friends. For example, Dora reported that

her parents told her many stories about the festive parties they had with relatives and close family friends in their native homeland. She sighed, "My gosh, what parties! Crazy parties. They were very happy. Not drinking hardly, no alcohol business . . . they were singing songs and they were happy." Ellen's father refrained from talking about his life before the Genocide. She remembered only one story he would tell her about his many brothers and the sense of family he experienced with them through play. "How much fun he and his brothers had fighting all the time. He thought that was great. He'd say, 'We'd box each other and we had a great free-for-all.' He said it was wonderful. He said, 'I love my brothers and we all loved each other.'"

As expressed by Shirley, most of the women also described ethnic pride and maintenance of family reputations.

> I think the integrity of the Armenian people is really great. I mean there is nothing, you know, when we were in Fresno and young, we were known as the starving Armenians and all this garbage. Their reputation now, they are the most respected people in Fresno, in California. So what can I say? I was taught to never shy away from my heritage. I have never been ashamed to say that I was Armenian.

These feelings of ethnic pride were nurtured in children through stories. Stories that were shared about Armenian cultural history and survival encouraged family members to develop strong ethnic identities. Although not all women had stories unique to their families, many described times that parents read to them stories of Armenian culture and folklore. Some women were taught Armenian history and told stories of important Armenian figures. Women who knew these

stories expressed cultural pride and appreciation for all that previous Armenians had endured. Anoush suggested that many Armenian families were learning about their cultural history and subsequent ethnic pride through stories. As she explained, "You learn from your parents certain stories. But these stories were actually stories that you [interviewer] know also." Alice explained that these stories were told "over and over again," because they were important to hear. Sonia shared how her father would read "Armenian history and fables" to the children every evening, a ritual that she and her husband continued with their children.

The dominant social milieu during the time when immigrants, including Armenians, arrived in the United States, influenced how families chose to define and emphasize ethnic identity (Pleck, 2000). Most of the women described early experiences with prejudice and isolation. As shaped by both immigration and Genocide experiences, participants described parental attempts to foster strong personal and ethnic pride in children. Dora shared how her grandfather would talk to his grandchildren every night about the importance of feeling pride. "He'd make everyone sit down after they were from work. He used to tell us about our heritage and so on and so forth. He would say, you must be proud of being Armenian." Ellen explained how much her father stressed the importance of sharing Armenian stories in the family as well as with others who did not know much about Armenians. "Yes. My father said, you know, you're the Armenian here. You are a role model. And I've heard this from other Hyes [Armenians] in my generation. You know, we were role models, we were the only one. And you had to do the best

and tell them stories about your culture." Hearing these stories from parents reinforced feelings of pride and encouraged children to identify positively with their ethnicity.

Women who did not recall any family stories of note often were raised in families where Genocide experiences were not discussed. As Doris has suggested, some stories were simply too "painful to tell." A few women did share painful stories outside of the Genocide experience that were shared by their parents and grandparents. Women described family experiences with alcoholism, gambling, and divorce. Some grandfathers and fathers lost businesses due to mismanagement. Some family members were depicted as unfeeling and self-centered. One woman exclaimed that she wasn't interested in listening to her mother's stories because " . . . hers were all negatives! Just drove me crazy. I can't, I don't mind hearing but when it is with bitterness, I don't like it." A few women shared the importance of knowing these other painful stories so as not to repeat past mistakes.

As others have found (Martin et al., 1988), few stories went back more than two generations. Reliance on oral narratives, the loss of storytellers, and the unavailability of technology to record stories may have accounted for the short longevity. Stories that depicted Genocide experiences, however, may endure across many generations. Most of the women highlighted the importance of these stories. Four women reported having written histories of a parent's or grandparent's story of survival.

Women may not have known older stories, additionally, because of the lack of grandparents to tell them. The participants in this study came from cohorts where grandparents were less likely to live long. Many of the women also lost grandparents in the Genocide. Those who were fortunate to have a living grandparent when growing up often heard family stories. These women remarked that it was the stories of their grandparents that they remembered or grandparents from whom they heard the most about family history. It was also the stories of grandparents that some women mourned not knowing.

Possessions and Legacies

Although Genocide stories emerged as an important family legacy, stories were not the only legacies mentioned by participants. The women described valued possessions, activities, and rituals as other important family legacies. Financial inheritances, a common definition of legacies, were seldom mentioned. According to participants, the most notable legacies were stories, possessions, rituals, and activities attached to core family values. As one woman exclaimed with her hand on her chest, "what I have from my parents is in here!" Typically, women wished to pass these very same things to future generations.

Certain possessions are physical legacies passed down in families. In this study, each woman was asked if she could identify a valued family possession(s) and describe the meanings associated with it. Of the 30 women, 21 women identified one to three valued items while 2 women identified more than three.

Seven women, 6 of whom came from families who experienced Genocide losses, could not identify any valued possession. A common story emerged. The historical experiences of Genocide and migration left many families bereft of possessions. In general, the women had difficulty identifying items. If they could identify items, they were few in number. Identified items often had little monetary value. Instead, they were important as symbolic reminders of family and conveyed certain meanings to the women who inherited them. For instance, one woman valued liquor glasses used when entertaining other Armenian friends. These glasses were a reminder of her mother and also represented her mother's family labor in an Armenian household.

Loss of Possessions

When asked to elaborate on their lack of valued possessions, most of the women replied as Sofia did: "Well, my parents were not able to bring anything to this country. They came with the clothes on their back, so there's nothing of physical attachment to the old country. What they brought was their spirit. And, but as far as an object, no. There's nothing I can pass on."

Whether there was direct loss of family members during the Genocide, all families at some point left their native countries. For the 11 women born outside of the United States, family histories typically included not one but numerous episodes of forced relocation to new countries. As described by the women, relocation influenced the type and number of items brought to new homes. In most

cases, they brought nothing. Seda explained that her most valued family possession was simply too heavy. "We had a Bible. It was a very big Bible. We couldn't bring it. We gave it to a church." Anahit also emphasized that her family had no items. "I really don't. Because I left Sudan and didn't bring anything with me." Diane said it was typical for Armenian families to have so few things in their possession. "We have nothing from overseas at all . . . . All of them [other families]. They all did [had nothing.] They had to run away." Armenoui pointed out that her family had "lost a lot of things by coming." Alice described how her mother had to discard the few possessions she tried to bring to America. "When my mother was coming, the ship almost sank. So they had, so she had to throw everything overboard, even her pictures. That made her so sad. She had no pictures." Only two women mentioned more than three possessions of value. One of these, Zabel, had a number of items, including a hope chest she brought to America from her previous home. Her family left Turkey before they suffered any physical losses and later she came to America in a planned move. "We were legitimately moving to the United States . . . . I have a hope chest. And we have all kinds of table cloths and things that we brought. A whole set of furniture that mother eventually sold. And pictures. We were not fleeing this time."

Forced relocation and subsequent poverty may have shaped the way these women viewed possessions. Some of the women were forthright in placing little emphasis on material possessions. For instance, Barbara stated, "I don't have, we really don't have material things. Material things are nice but they are not the most

important things in life." Ellen described her parents as putting little value on objects. "There weren't a lot of things. My folks weren't into the material." According to Jacqueline the "things that were valued were just family, being a family unit. And the fact that my family stretched out to [helped] people."

Sonia was unable to think of any object from past generations that was valued. She noted that her family had lost everything in the country that they had left before reaching Beirut. "So we had to start all over again in Beirut, Lebanon. Whatever we had in Beirut was more or less borrowed. We left everything behind and came to this country and started again." She added that her father verbalized his sadness at their moves. "That's why my father used to say, 'I prayed that God would allow me to flee to this country as my last country and not from here anymore.' He had moved enough, you know."

Possessions and Their Meanings

When possessions were identified, women linked family meanings to these items. They acted as family symbols and vehicles for intergenerational transmission through the stories and images attached to them. In previous studies, older adults valued possessions suggesting family history, continuity with previous generations, and connection to others (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Kamptner, 1989; Rubinstein, 1987; Stum, 1999; Tobin, 1996). Similarly, women in this study valued possessions for their connections to family members, usually parents. Previous findings that women place special significance on symbolic

representations of family ties were evident in this sample (Dittmar, 1992; Kamptner, 1991; Sherman, 1991; Wapner et al., 1990).

In all, 41 valued possessions were identified. As indicated in Table 3, most of the women reported at least one family item of value. Only 17 (33%) items, however, were items families possessed prior to the Genocide. Among these, photographs, small carpets, and jewelry were brought to this country. These items, typically brought under stressful situations, appeared to be both valued and easily transportable. All women from families who did not experience Genocide loss reported valued possessions. Six of the seven women who were unable to identify anything of value reported family experiences of Genocide loss.

Table 3

Type and Number of Valued Possessions

	Frequency		
Type of Possession	From Turkey	From Diaspora	%
Mother's wedding ring		2	4.9
Photograph	9	5	34.1
Small trinket (e.g., coins, buttons)		2	4.9
Work of art		2	4.9
Written family history		2	4.9
Jewelry	2	5	17.1

(table continues)

Type of Possession	Frequency		%
	From Turkey	From Diaspora	
Small carpet	3		7.3
Belt	1		2.4
Dishes/household item		4	9.8
Hope chest		1	2.4
Handwork	1		2.4
Bible/hymnal	1		2.4
Plant		1	2.4
Total	17	24	99.9

Note. Seven women reported no valued possessions.

Photographs appear to hold great family meaning and are highly treasured by family members (Csikszentmihayli & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Tobin, 1996; Unruh, 1983). Photographs often act as narratives, marking key transitions, rites of passage, and important family events (Kotkin & Zeitlin, 1983). The ability to see what family members looked like, especially in the face of family loss, was critically important to participants. Fourteen women identified photographs as their most valued family items and 9 of the women indicated that their photographs originated in Turkey. Whatever the situation, some family members were able to bring a few photographs with them and these photographs have become treasured items. Many were prominently displayed in the women's homes and were shown

during interviews. For instance, Lily had another family member bring a photograph from her wall as she talked about her father's parents. She indicated that these grandparents were the only grandparents she knew in terms of physical appearance. Because she had their images, she felt connected to them even though they were killed in Turkey before she was born.

Most of the photographs were pictures either of parents or of the women as young children. Photographs of grandparents were rare. Some women attributed this rarity to relocation and pointed out that photographs were few because "in those days, we didn't take pictures like they do now." In some cases, families may not have been able to afford or access photographers. Four of the women described families as having plentiful resources in Turkey, with such possessions as horses, jewelry, fine homes, and furnishings. In all cases, however, families were stripped of most of their possessions. If a family was able to leave Turkey before Genocide loss occurred, they appeared to have a few more photographs and other small items in their possession.

Besides photographs, other items survived. Three women indicated that they had small carpets, although they described their poor quality and current state of deterioration. One woman explained that a small rug, her one valued possession, was from her father's home in Turkey. "Except for that one carpet that they brought, which is still, isn't the greatest carpet in the world, you know. It's not a treasure but you know, it's something." Used much as present-day sleeping bags, these carpets initially were utilitarian items necessary for family survival. In later

times, however, they emerged as symbols of family survival. "My mother said that grandpa took two or three rugs under his arms. They used that to sleep on, on the ship they came over on. There was only one rug left by the time my uncle got married. He got married in 1933 and it's, it's you know, we still have it . . . but it's very thin. There's no body left to it at all. It has seen a lot."

Jewelry and handwork were mentioned as other items originating in Turkey. Again, the women placed little monetary value on these items. The fathers of two women had been jewelers. Although not made of precious metals, these pieces were handmade. One woman who had a bit of handwork indicated that it was part of a shawl made by her grandmother. She expressed her regret, however, in failing to question her father more thoroughly about the item.

Other items identified by the women were valued objects that typically originated within their parents' generation. These included photographs, jewelry, dishes, and household items. Two of the women possessed a family history, which in both cases was penned by their fathers. Lily's father not only wrote about his experiences but also wrote poetry that he published in a book written in Armenian. She mentioned one poem that was dedicated to her grandmother because "he really loved his mother and he was so sad to leave her there and go." This story had significance as a record of her father's experiences and as a representation of the bond between her grandmother and her father.

The items that the women identified in this study as legacies were representative of their parents. As mentioned earlier, photographs were the most

valued due to their clear connections to past family members. Jewelry, handwork, dishes, and wedding rings were all mentioned as pieces connected to mothers. For instance, Madeline commented that she had only a few items, a bud vase and a couple of glasses. They were special to her, however, because they were "a handful of little things that I remembered that she used. They reminded me of my mother." Two participants identified their mother's wedding rings as holding great meaning. Although these gold bands were not expensive items, they were valued as symbols of connection to mothers and of the marital bond of parents. A third woman described at length her mother's wedding band that she inadvertently donated to a charity. By her tone of voice and description, this loss was significant to her.

The few items the women possessed, with the exception of the photographs, were typically those used or made by parents. These items also reflected gendered patterns. For instance, items mothers had used to serve food, to entertain, or to adorn themselves were most frequently in the possession of daughters and were designated as special.

As these items were described, women told stories connected to them. For instance, Ellen talked at length about a watercolor painting she inherited from her parents. Apparently, her parents bought it from another Armenian immigrant who needed money. She has learned that this painting has great financial value although it is valued more as a reminder of her home where it hung above the fireplace. Some of the women described jewelry they owned as presents given between grandparents and thus, symbols of family connection and love. Armenoui described

small bells made by her father. These bells, typically used by Moslems in his area, were valued because he made them and they reminded her of her father and his vocation. Rose described the most unusual item. She was given a number of grapevines from her mother's garden; the leaves are used in preparing an Armenian dish.

Valued Family Possessions and Siblings

Valuable possessions are not easily divided when passed to others. Because the women had few material items, coming from a large family may have influenced whether a woman had the item she most valued. For instance, Anoush indicated that she received many of the family items because she had strong connections to the Armenian culture, and, more importantly, she was the oldest daughter. Similarly, women indicated that they did not have items because they had older siblings. Ana indicated that a small hymnal and Bible survived the Genocide experiences of her parents. These items were not in her possession, however. "They remain with my older sister." When asked if she had any valued possessions from previous family members, Jasmine replied: "Not really because we didn't have much to begin with and if there was anything, the older sisters and brothers probably got it. I don't have anything of value that I could say really. No."

Because other siblings possessed items that could not be divided, conflict was apparent in stories of certain valued objects. Louise, especially, was sad that an original picture of her mother, grandmother, and aunt from Turkey was not in her

possession. She talked at length about her brother's refusal to part with the picture or even to have it copied. She was very concerned about her niece inheriting the item because it was not evident that she would value it as much as Louise did. Another woman noted that her sister did not care for the items in her possession. In this case, the sister had broken most of the pieces in a valued set of a dishes and Arlene was distraught over their demise. Other women mentioned, without resentment, that certain items were not in their possession due to sibling succession.

Rituals and Activities

Rituals within families may be described as "stylized cultural performance" (Pleck, 2000, p. 10) and defined as ceremonial use and recurring patterns of leisure that occur in everyday events such as shared meals or formalized occasions such as birthday celebrations (Kotkin & Zeitlin, 1983). Rituals bind individuals and families together over time and across generations. For an ethnic group, a collective identity based on history and culture is often expressed through rituals and activities experienced in families. For instance, one woman described how she played music with her extended family every Sunday when younger. Her descriptions focused less on the music and more on the connections she felt toward her immediate family and relatives as well as her Armenian culture when doing this activity. Certain activities represent, as well, ways for subsequent generations to experience symbolic ethnicity described as a voluntarily ethnic affiliation that

assimilated family members may pursue intentionally. (Alba, 1990; Bakalian, 1993).

In this study, family activities and rituals represented another form of legacy that conveyed strong family connections and ties to Armenian culture. Some activities such as attending church or celebrating specific holidays were formalized. Other occurrences were interwoven into the daily lives of families. For instance, almost all of the women discussed cooking with their mothers and grandmothers. They depicted this activity as important to family well-being but also as an avenue to learn family stories, extend and promote Armenian identity, and care for others. As in the examination of other family legacies, rituals and activities were critical in shaping feelings about family and were influenced by historical events. They were also defined by the gendered patterns established in these families, with strong divisions of labor between women and men. Enacting rituals, planning activities, and encouraging ethnic maintenance typically were the work of women (di Leonardo, 1987; Gillis, 1997; Pleck, 2000). Diane emphasized this point by commenting that women across generations keep families connected. "Most always girls will be more that way than boys, most of the time. I think you'll find that in every nationality, every generation that girls are always, will be keeping everyone together more than males. That's just the way it is."

There was great commonality among the women concerning activities and rituals. Getting together with relatives and friends and celebrating special holidays and birthdays were emphasized in terms of family cohesion and kin relations.

Attending church encouraged ethnic identity and a sense of community. Most women talked at great length about cooking and learning the recipes of grandmothers and mothers. Finally, women described parental activities and uses of leisure time that encouraged altruism and service to others.

Family Gatherings

Many women described times that family members assembled, shared meals, related stories, and played music. These events, although neither formalized nor structured, occurred often and were described as recurring family events that shaped family life and conveyed important messages concerning family cohesion and ethnic identity. Eva described gatherings of family and friends. "Always . . . food and tradition and uncles and aunts were always around and talking and loving. Everybody, was you know, we would call everybody Auntie, even though they weren't related." Melane described family gatherings as joyful times. "We'd sing, we'd dance. The youngsters were dancing. And always we had friends. They used to come and play the violin. You should have seen it. It was really fun. We didn't have to go to hotels and restaurants to enjoy ourselves. It was a family affair."

Most of the women described the practice of visiting [italics added] other families and having families drop in often to visit with them. For instance, Doris recalled the flavor of her family's gatherings. "We used to invite all of the Armenians into our house. Always, we had something!" Melane noted that visiting was important in her family as well. "Oh we did [visiting]. Oh, that's all Armenians

do, you know. We do it all the time." She then proceeded to describe her past week's activities and the visits she made to other Armenians in the community.

Women highlighted birthdays, Christmas, and Easter as special times when family would be together. Some women who grew up in the United States recalled celebrating both an Armenian and an American Christmas on different dates. Celebrations for an individual family member occurred on the day they shared with a saint of the same name. Eva described how her relatives assembled before going to the home of the family member. "We would get an apple and put a candle on it. And we'd gather and we would walk to their house at night to honor them on their name day."

Women described picnics as common activities in families. These picnics were generally with other Armenian families during times when parents were not at work. Music and food were shared and children played with each other. Local Armenian churches often sponsored picnics. They provided a time for families to gather with other Armenians, hear stories, and learn songs and dances native to their homelands.

Typically, informal and often impromptu, gatherings characterized the families of the women and the time in which they grew up. Twenty-six women grew up in strong ethnic communities where Armenians sought out opportunities to spend time with each other. At these gatherings, Armenian women and men felt comfortable with others who spoke the same language, enjoyed the same cuisine

and music, and, at a deeper level, survived to make a new Armenian life together in an adopted country. Sonia emphasized that it was important "just to be together."

Religious Participation

An organized ritual that occurred frequently in the lives of the participants was attending church. Many women described church as a critical part of their childhood and as an important legacy received from their families. Churches were important not only for preserving religious traditions but also for perpetuating Armenian cultural practices. Churches also provided an organized way for families to connect with other Armenians in the area. Some women emphasized the social connections that occurred at their churches through activities such as attending Sunday School, going as a family to church, or being with others during social hours. Other women noted their parents' strong Christian beliefs and the importance of their faith as a bond that connected them to parents and grandparents.

Women in families where faith development was critical described structured time of family prayer either in the mornings or before meals. Seda, who came from a family of ministers and church workers shared that "everyday, we had daily devotionals." Ellen also described her parents in terms of their faith. "My parents were real believers. They went to church regularly. And my mother was reading the bible every morning, first thing. And my father, sometimes I'd pass their bedroom, you know, just before he was going to bed and I could hear him

praying. They talked about their Christian experience, their belief in God helping them through all their, you know, hard times. So I got that."

Interestingly, two women talked about parents who were not "believers" themselves but who encouraged their children to attend church. Both women felt that these parents were not able to believe due to their Genocide experiences, yet valued the church for its strong connections to other Armenians. Six women reported going to non-Armenian churches as youth, due either to a lack of availability of Armenian churches or family preference. These same women appeared the least strongly identified with their ethnicity. As is true in other ethnic groups, children of immigrants who lived in multiethnic neighborhoods, attended nonethnic churches, and valued dominant culture activities are more likely to discard rituals and activities that were specific to their parents (Pleck, 2000).

Cooking

One activity brought up in almost every interview was cooking. Devault (1991) indicated that the work of feeding families is "transmitted through activities that link women across generations" (p. 106). Participants described how they learned to cook from family members, predominately mothers and grandmothers, and how they valued both preparing and eating Armenian food. Many women talked at length about specific recipes and how they learned them. The observation of grandmothers and mothers cooking was described often with fondness. Women learned important messages about gender and family activities during these times

as well. Anahit shared how she learned to make dolma (stuffed vegetables or grape leaves) and what she remembered from these times with her grandmother.

> She used to sit down and make the dolma. And as little girls, since we weren't supposed to go out or play or mix except in school, I used to hang around grandmother when she was cooking. I was watching her and helping her in making dolma. And she finishes it [no filling leftover.] All my life when I am making dolma, nothing was left behind as if I had measured. Every squash, she had filled it. Every leaf and then it is all finished. It is as if I had measured. And believe it or not, I never forgot that! Now when I make it, I think of Grandma, about what she used to say all the time, all her interesting stories.

A few women recalled the pressure they felt to learn each recipe well. "We had to learn, you know, my grandmother used to force us to learn." Doris illustrated cooking with her mother. "She used to say, you better learn. After I die, who is going to do it? You better learn. So I would stand there and watch her making the kufta [ground lamb and bulgur]. And so I learned by watching. You learn a lot by watching rather than a recipe." Lily added that her desire to learn to cook from her grandmother had other motivations as well. "The things that we liked the most we learned how to make of course."

Service to Others

Many of the women described family meanings they received through the activities that were important to their parents. For instance, women noted the importance of serving and helping others. Most Armenian children were aware of the dependence their families had experienced at one time; they knew their lives and those of their parents had been changed through acts of intervention (Miller &

Miller, 1992). Because most parents in these immigrant families had been dependent on others for help during their struggles for survival, this emphasis on serving others occurred through family activities, family conversations, and family stories. Madeline, who had very little information about her parents' history and Genocide experiences, learned from an aunt that her mother had been a hard worker and inclined to serve others. Madeline took great pride in her mother's work ethic and identified it as a strong legacy that was passed on to her. Ana said that on Sundays, her father typically would visit other families where individuals were sick or in need of help. Serving others, she added, was "emphasized in my spirit." Jacqueline described how her mother frequently opened her door to others, often breaking open a watermelon and bringing it out to share. Armine noted the many times her father gave money to others who needed it or went shopping for elderly neighbors unable to leave their homes.

The women mentioned many instances of parents helping others in need. By choosing to do such activities, parents modeled these interests to their children. Identifying these activities as valued family legacies, many of the women reported how critically they valued providing service to others in their own lives. Seda recalled daily occurrences when her parents helped others in need. As an older woman, she explained how she has continued this legacy of helping others by housing new immigrants in her home. "We have four bedrooms upstairs, one is used for an office. We now have this boy [adult man] who came from Aleppo. He

had no place to stay. And now his mother came to stay . . . . always I have company. It seems that this is my mission."

Summary

The legacies that participants received from their families were shaped by the Genocide experience. The extent to what they knew about these family experiences and how they were told influenced their life course development. Participants who knew little about their family experiences of Genocide were less likely to know family history including details about specific relatives and life in Turkey. These participants were also less likely to have received certain legacies from family members that emphasized ethnic identity.

The historical experiences of Genocide and forced relocation to new countries left many families bereft of physical possessions that could be passed on to succeeding generations. Women placed less emphasis, consequently, on possessions as family legacies. For participants in this study, legacies took other forms. Women highlighted family legacies that included family stories, rituals, and activities. The family story and cultural experience of the Armenian Genocide, however, emerged as the most notable legacy passed on to participants.

CHAPTER 5: LEGACIES PASSED ON TO THE NEXT GENERATION

Family members maintain connection across generations through legacies. Some legacies are persistent and extend to succeeding generations despite family preferences. For example, although some parents chose not to share experiences, participants received the legacy of the Armenian Genocide. Other legacies are passed on to succeeding generations through an intentional process that reflects individual choices and changing historical contexts. The older mothers in this study served as the active link for many of the intergenerational transmissions in their families. They determined what to pass on to others and worked to ensure that legacies would be received. Legacies were shaped by participant age and the gendered expectations of motherhood and family work. As the generation that preceded them, women shared legacies within the changing context of Armenian family life in the aftermath of the Genocide.

To illustrate the ways that participants passed legacies on to future generations, I begin the chapter by continuing the composite descriptions of three Armenian American women as outlined in Chapter 4. I organize this chapter around the following themes: (a) legacies valued and shared, (b) focus on the transmission of legacies, and (c) obstacles to passing on legacies.

Variability of Experiences Among Three Armenian Mothers

The women in this sample fell into three distinct categories as they shaped and passed on certain legacies to family members. The stories of Azniv, Flora, and Audrey continue to provide insights as to how family legacies are received and passed on to succeeding generations.

Azniv

As described earlier, Azniv was born in Beirut, Lebanon to Genocide survivors. Her parents were active in the Armenian Apostolic Church and a local Armenian orphanage. She described her family as devout, spending time together during morning devotionals and volunteering time to help other Armenian refugees. She shared many memories of her childhood and young adulthood in Lebanon, which demonstrated her family's limited resources and the political turmoil evident in Lebanon at the time. After her adult daughter relocated to the United States, Azniv, her husband, and her three other children were able to enter this country where she has lived for 24 years.

Azniv's one daughter and two sons married Armenians. Widowed for 16 years, Azniv lived with her unmarried daughter in close proximity to all of her children who frequently gathered at her home during weekends. Azniv was very active in her local Armenian Apostolic Church, provided leadership in women's fellowship activities, and cooked regularly with other Armenian women to raise money through the Church's annual bazaar. She interacted with Armenians

exclusively, spoke Armenian with all of her family members including grandchildren, and was well aware of the Armenian Genocide and her family losses. In recent years, Azniv has experienced some health problems that have influenced her activity level. Her unmarried daughter now helps to facilitate many of the family activities that Azniv had coordinated in the past. Azniv identified only one valued family possession, a Bible. She explained that family possessions were lost in the forced relocations that her family had to undertake first when she was a child and later as an adult. She emphasized how important it was to her that her children and grandchildren stay strongly identified with the Armenian culture, attend the Armenian Church, and marry Armenians.

Twelve women in this study expressed strong Armenian identities and described similar experiences. Eight of the 12 women were born outside of the United States.

Flora

Born in the United States, Flora described her intent as a young woman to marry whomever she pleased, regardless of cultural heritage. To her surprise, however, she later met an Armenian man, married, and had four children. Three of her children married Armenians and one child married a non-Armenian. Despite wishing that her one daughter had married an Armenian, Flora has learned to accept the marriage.

Although she was involved in Armenian activities, Flora expressed that she was comfortable in both American and Armenian circles. She worked hard to help establish an Armenian Protestant Church in her area "for her children," but her paid work brought her predominantly in contact with non-Armenians most of her adult life. She was able to identify many legacies in her family, both those received from parents and those she planned to pass or had passed on to family members. She described what she knew about her parents' Genocide experiences and shared how her children have been told these stories as well. She occasionally cooked Armenian dishes for family during special occasions and attended church irregularly now that her children were grown. She shared how she reevaluated some old traditions and customs in her family and adapted them to present circumstances ranging from revised recipes to the messages she hoped to convey to her family members when sharing Genocide stories. "I tell them the truth also. But it is also not only speaking Armenian, feeling Armenian, and pushing the Armenian cause. I don't believe in killing and going after Turks. That is not the way that I believe. I believe that education is the best tool for fighting the Turks or anything else. Now that is what they have learned though my stories."

Fourteen women in this study described experiences similar to Flora. Three of the 14 women were born outside of the United States.

Audrey

Raised in a small California community with few Armenians, Audrey emphasized the importance of her Christian faith and love for her mother. Although Audrey's family interacted primarily with relatives and a few Armenian families when young, she was very vocal in her dismay over many of the Armenian practices she observed. She married an Armenian and noted how little he ascribed to Armenian traditions and customs. As a family, they regularly attended a local Lutheran church. They had four children who have all married non-Armenians. She has accepted these marriages.

Audrey mentioned a variety of legacies that she wished to share with her children, primarily those that emphasized strong kin connections. She was not interested in passing down ethnic legacies; in some cases, she actively rejected them. The only Armenian legacy she could identify was teaching her daughters how to cook Armenian food, a practice she no longer performed except when asked by her children. For example, Audrey expressed her distaste for the cultural practice of visiting.

> A group of Armenians that sit around and visit. Visit is the word I like to use, through the years, have turned me off more than anything. I never understood the, I'm 79, but I've never understood why you have to tear people apart to find any satisfaction in life. I don't get the connection at all. You know people are people and everybody is different. Respect them for whatever they're, wherever they come, and leave them alone. There are some people who are never really happy unless they are literally tearing each other down. And this unfortunately is a very strong characteristic of Armenian women . . . . as a young girl, I can remember I used to feel like I wanted to steer clear of this group.

Audrey's story was similar to four women in this study. All of these women were born in the United States.

Legacies Valued and Shared

Every woman in this study identified family legacies they saw as critical to share with succeeding generations. The women described how they have told family stories, passed down heirlooms, taught grandchildren how to cook, arranged family reunions, and organized celebrations. Some women indicated that they had already passed some legacies on to family members. Barbara described a ring that she recently gave to her daughter-in-law. "I gave it to her and said, 'this is for you when you have a daughter' and now she has one. But it will be handed from generation to generation. It was my grandmother's on my mother's side." Other women outlined certain legacies that they planned to pass to family members in the near future. Ellen was slowly translating a long letter written by her father in his youth to share with her daughters and grandchildren. Although most women could identify the ways that they passed these legacies to others, some women had difficulties in describing this process. These women felt that sharing legacies was part of their everyday family experiences. Specific efforts to pass on family legacies were not recognized, in some cases, until the interview. Eva commented:

> I don't remember actually doing it but just by my actions and things that we did automatically transferred. I don't think that I specifically said anything. But through our conversations and our reminiscences and our life style, a

> family keeping together, going to church, respecting our heritage, and keeping in touch with Armenia. I think that automatically we lived it.

Legacies and Family Connections

Although participants differed in the ways they shared certain legacies, there was some agreement as to the most important legacies to pass down to families. Above all else, women most voiced their desire to share legacies that conveyed the importance of family and kin connections. Betty emphasized that she hoped her legacies would convey the importance of "a sense of family." She wanted her family members to know "how we care, naturally how we cared for them. How warm and close we are to each other and that family, oh, family life is very important."

Influenced by family experiences of Genocide and immigration, participants were concerned with legacies that encouraged continuity of family closeness across generations. Participants chose legacies that demonstrated how they valued kinship ties and placed those connections as their top priority. Women highlighted legacies that ultimately expressed "the closeness of the family" such as annual family gatherings with adult children, grandchildren, and relatives. Family stories and photographs that signified a sense of family were deemed important to pass on to family members. Participants also described specific activities such as shared meals, morning devotions, Sunday picnics, or holiday celebrations as meaningful legacies.

Jasmine felt that one of her legacies was the family gatherings she organized on a regular basis.

> I really noticed this in the Armenian families and I thought we overdid it, but I mean, it's surprising how the family unit is no longer what it used to be even in America. I think it was a lot stronger than it is now. Now with everybody's busy life style pulling this and that . . . so that is one thing I try to keep going. I mean it's such an ingrown thing to us. I don't even think of it as doing anything special because that's the way we Armenians live, that's our life to be together.

Legacies and close relationships. Across the lifespan, parents and children maintain strong connections in terms of contact, provision of aid, and emotional and physical support (Logan & Spitze, 1996; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Walker, 1999). Women of all ages, generally, place emphasis on kin connections (Rossi & Rossi, 1990) and mothers tend to have strong relationships with adult children (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). Most women reported closeness with at least one adult child in their families and spoke of valuing this relationship. Because they emphasized the centrality of kin connections, women were motivated to think of legacies primarily in terms of family rather than extended kin, community, or society. They were eager and worked actively to share legacies with those they valued most, their adult children and grandchildren.

Through legacies, women demonstrated how they prioritized and invested in those relationships and activities that brought them the greatest reward. All 30 women described as their most valued relationships contacts with adult children and grandchildren, as well as long-term friends. For women like Azniv and Flora,

these friends were typically Armenian and affiliated with churches. As Carstensen (1992) suggested, the women in this study desired to share legacies with those individuals who provided them with the most emotional support and positive outcomes. Especially the oldest participants and those with limited physical stamina wished to focus their legacies through a selective process that centered on close kin. Although they were able to care for themselves and participate in activities, Melane, Seda, Alice, and Shirley, four of the oldest women in the sample, shaped the types of interactions they had with others in ways that kept them closely connected to their most intimate family members and friends. They made choices to spend time in their homes with children, grandchildren, and siblings, or at church, socializing and cooking with friends. All four women indicated that they worked hard to encourage adult children to attend church. With the exception of the youngest participants still working for pay, these women created situations in either church or home, spending time with immediate family members and certain women friends.

Participants described passing on legacies to both adult children and grandchildren but they were more apt to pass legacies on to daughters. For instance, daughters were often designated recipients of certain possessions and stories when compared with sons. Anoush described why she chose to share more of her family heirlooms with her daughter than with her son and his fiancé. "I think I will feel closer to my daughter because she is my daughter and it is not somebody else's daughter coming into the family. I have this closeness. Because she is the one who

has kept the, she is close to her dad and she is close to me. Our son is very close to us too but not like our daughter." Madeline noted that she would give her most precious heirlooms to her daughter rather than her son. "I think they have more meaning to my daughter than to my son. And I don't mean that in a derogatory way. It's just that my daughter is special."

Legacies and motherhood. As participants described the ways that they passed on legacies to family members, it was evident that they saw this process as an extension of their experiences as mothers. Similar to women in many patriarchal cultures and specific to their Armenian context, participants' primary identification was that of mother (Coltrane, 1998; Rich, 1978). Participants seldom mentioned legacies without referring to their identity as both mothers and grandmothers, as well as the types of activities they initiated as mothers.

Every participant wanted future family stories, additionally, to feature their care activities and the work they performed to keep families close. Ellen elaborated this point by stating her desire to have her efforts remembered with an understanding of her "sense of family loyalty. I hope they think of me as a person that tried to solidify this family." Anahit wanted others to remember how children were always welcome in her home and how much she did to keep them entertained and happy. Diane talked of wanting others to remember strong "family ties" and Sofia wanted her attempts to "impart closeness and loving" to be remembered as her ultimate legacy. Jacqueline emphasized that she wanted her family to receive

"more family than possessions" indicating that family cohesion was the most important legacy she could pass on to her children.

Participants highlighted their care for others as the focus of labor in their households (Thorne, 1982) and they worked hard as kinkeepers to ensure that this caring work was completed (Di Leonardo, 1984, 1987). These activities enhanced the likelihood that legacies would be shared among family members. Participants encouraged family connections across households (Di Leonardo, 1987), provided emotional and instrumental help to kin in need (Logan & Spitze, 1996), and acted as family historians (Rosenthal, 1985). They described themselves as the instigators of family reunions, the center for family communication, and the hostess for family visits and celebrations. Anoush described her role as kinkeeper.

> I do feel a responsibility of keeping the families together. Like I make sure that everybody knows where the center is. They have to come here for certain occasions and yes, absolutely, even if there is a problem in the family, I try to solve it to make sure that the family stays together. That is very important. I think they do look up to me in a way. And I make sure that they are okay. I am keeping the families together.

Nineteen women described their performance of kinkeeping activities. Adult children, in some cases, supported mothers in these activities. Daughters often inherited the legacy of kinkeeping from their mothers. This was especially true for those women who had chronic diseases, had performed kinkeeping activities in the past, and were older than 75 years.

Legacies and Ethnicity

As the stories of Azniv and Flora suggested, women also emphasized legacies that focused on ethnicity. Twenty-six of the 30 women expressed the importance of keeping future generations strongly connected to their Armenian roots. Sonia's words echoed the majority of participants' feelings concerning legacies and ethnic identity. "I want them to remember where they come from. I want them to remember their grandparents and where they've come from. I don't want them to forget the Genocide. I want them to know the history of each parent and each grandparent. Which they do, and pass it on. Yeah, that's important. Because they've heard their grandparent's stories, so they know."

Although differing in the intensity of these feelings, other women stressed similar opinions when elaborating on the importance of ethnicity and legacies. With a raised voice, Armine exclaimed, "They shouldn't lose their identity at all! They should always be proud to be Armenian!" As Louise explained her priorities in what she would like to pass on to families, she stressed, "First and foremost, they have Armenian blood." Though still important, some women placed less emphasis on the importance of ethnic identity in succeeding generations. Zabel remarked that she did not feel her children should necessarily strongly identify as Armenian, however, "it's just that I would like that. I would like that. I think they should but I'm not sure how strong."

Many of the participants expressed responsibility to pass on legacies anchored to ethnicity to ensure that their children stay ethnically identified. Ellen

expressed the connection between these activities and the responsibilities she experienced as a mother by stressing that "we always call Armenia our motherland. We don't say fatherland!" She indicated that these responsibilities motivated her work in "carrying out certain things that were important." As outlined by the women, some of these responsibilities included organizing celebrations of traditional Armenian holidays, cooking Armenian foods to bring family together, and attending to the cultural education of grandchildren.

Relative to ethnic men, ethnic women are more inclined to have fluid boundaries regarding ethnic identity and they tend to have more hyphenated cultural identities (Rumbaut, 1995). As Azniv, they also tend to rate their ethnic backgrounds as important (Alba, 1990). Within families, ethnic women have felt compelled to undertake activities that maintain kin connections and ethnicity (Di Leonardo, 1987). As part of the gendered division of labor in families, mothers have become organizers of ritual (Pleck, 2000) and facilitators of symbolic ethnicity among family members (Bakalian, 1993).

Ethnic legacies and stories. Due to the importance of family survival within the context of the Genocide and its aftermath, women described particular stories as important legacies passed on to family members. Azniv and Flora, for instance, heard these stories directly from parents and were more inclined to place emphasis on Genocide stories as legacies. Stories enabled family members to understand the importance of both family cohesion and ethnic roots. Women hoped these stories,

first, would convey the magnitude of what families suffered and more importantly, portray the resiliency and strength that families exhibited. To most women, it was vital that family members understood that their relatives persevered, and "did not give up." Sofia's description of what she wanted to pass on to family members highlighted the importance of sharing these family survival stories and their meanings.

> I want them to remember that they have a heritage. A true heritage of people who were strong, who were sometimes beaten down but survived. They were survivors. And that, if they could survive under the conditions under which they had to live in amongst the Turks and other people who came through Armenia, marauding hordes of people and subjugating them. If the Armenians could survive all that, they can survive! So that's, I hope, they get that sense.

Second, sharing Genocide stories was a way to ensure the survival of Armenians as an ethnic population. Hasmik expressed this most strongly by suggesting that her family stories had strong messages about the importance of ethnic identity and survival. She stressed that she had inherited a thorough understanding of the sacrifices and struggles that Armenians had endured from her parents' stories and she hoped that her children and grandchildren would know this as well. She emphasized, "We are Armenian! We will fight for our heritage, we will fight to help everybody. We will survive!" Because the international community has not officially acknowledged the Armenian Genocide, many women felt that their legacies acted as critical reminders of the horrors of Genocide. Anoush emphasized that "you want to push Armenian language and Armenian heritage and all that stuff because of that [the Genocide]."

A third purpose of sharing Genocide stories was that women simply wanted memories of family members to survive and for family members to know their connections to past generations. Carol emphasized the importance of sharing such stories with her grandchildren. "I want them to know where their great-grandparents came from, what they did. So they have something to pass down and that's the only way I can think of passing it down. As they get older, telling them the stories. Hopefully, I'll live long enough that I can tell them some of these stories."

Finally, aware that their stories could disappear with time, some women were making concerted efforts to ensure that these stories would be remembered. This was especially true for women who were told stories directly by parents. Identifying herself as the family historian, Sofia explained her desire for telling family stories and history. "So that they will know what's happened in the past. There isn't too much record left any more though. All the Bibles that had all the dates and things in it were burned or lost. There's no record from the old country. So whatever traditions we're starting, we're starting here with the memory of what I have accumulated over the years." Some women wrote their family histories and distributed them to family members. Others talked of wanting to do this in the future. Eva exclaimed, "I am going to make sure that I am going to get on that computer and write somehow, good or bad." Adult children also seemed to be encouraging their mothers to record stories and other details of family history. "He [her son] tells me that I should write all of this down, and I will."

Ethnic legacies and activities. Participants described how important it was to get children involved in Armenian-focused activities when young. As Louise pointed out, "If anything Armenian came along that we knew about, I made sure that they were aware of it and involved in it." Betty stressed that "you would take them whenever there was any kind of activity." Although Dora felt that she was "not doing enough" for her grandchildren, many of the women had extensive examples of ways that they encouraged children and grandchildren to do the types of activities that their parents had encouraged of them. For instance, many women issued frequent invitations to family members regarding Armenian Church activities such as picnics and food bazaars. Some women talked of encouraging children and grandchildren to participate in Armenian cultural activities such as playing music and dancing. Armenoui described afternoons when she would have her daughter and daughter-in-law as well as other women over to her house for Armenian cooking lessons. As grandmothers, many of the women talked of how they were teaching grandchildren to speak Armenian and taking them to church on Sundays. They attempted to replicate some of the activities that they remembered from their own childhood as well as keep their younger family members connected to family and culture.

Because churches continue to provide a strong mechanism for keeping Armenian people close, many of the women used the church to support them in extending cultural legacies to their families. As Ellen pointed out, the "Armenian Church has been, unfortunately in a way, but fortunately in another way, the carrier

of the 'Nation.' Wherever, you know, they were, there are Armenians." As portrayed by the women, the Armenian Church as an institution encouraged them to work toward the survival of the Armenian culture by providing opportunities to embrace younger generations. Frequently, women explained that they felt the Church was the best means to help children and grandchildren gain exposure to Armenian culture and to learn about important legacies linked to Armenian experiences. Madeline explained that all of her family members belonged to the Armenian Church and were baptized there. "So they do know that there is a connection there . . . . no matter what, we are American but we are also Armenian."

Participants also used kinkeeping as a mechanism to share ethnic legacies with other family members. Many of the gatherings and reunions arranged by participants were opportunities to experience Armenian family life. Great effort was expended in preparing ethnic Armenian dishes that provided the backdrop for these events. Women described singing, playing music, dancing, and conversing with others in Armenian during these events. The women in this study reported that for many children and grandchildren assimilated into the dominant American culture, these family events were their primary opportunities to stay connected to their Armenian roots.

Community legacies and ethnicity. Some women had established long-term legacies in their communities. It was clear from their descriptions that little emphasis was placed on the generative act of giving to communities. They viewed

these community legacies, rather, as a way to ensure that certain ethnic legacies would continue to be valued. Encouraged by a broad definition of motherhood and ethnic preservation, women worked hard to establish a permanent Armenian presence in communities. Women who labored the hardest to do this work held strong ethnic identities and were motivated by the value they placed on legacies received from parents. For example, women like Azniv worked hard to ensure that Armenian churches were established in their communities and made available to family members. Diane talked of how she helped to establish her church and pulled her husband into these endeavors.

> When they first were starting a church here about 30 years ago, I got a little bit involved. My husband didn't get too involved. So I started going back and forth and they bought property where it is now. It was a house. So when they fixed the house . . . we were there for a quite a few years. And so I got involved there. And then my husband was involved with it, too. So then we started building the church. Then my husband got really involved and started giving money.

Diane viewed this church as one of her most valued legacies and her family was now recognized as one of the founding families and staunchest supporters of the church.

Other women described monuments and statues memorializing Armenian family members that they helped create near churches, cemeteries, or cultural centers. A few women noted ongoing efforts to sponsor Armenians as they came to the United States to establish new lives. Six women taught Armenian language lessons over the years to large groups of children and adults, and some were instrumental in establishing Armenian language schools. Preparing Armenian food

at churches was a way to raise money to ensure church survival and 26 of 30 women worked in these efforts. Two women shared how their families have given significant amounts of money to Armenian cultural events so that certain types of music and dance would be offered to others.

As expected, women with the most financial resources were more likely to describe how they gave to Armenian communities and provided ways for their family members and others to stay ethnically identified. Women with fewer financial resources, however, still found ways to give to Armenian communities and churches largely through their donation of personal time.

Focus on the Transmission of Legacies

As participants described the legacies that they had already passed on or hoped to pass on to family members, it was evident that a number of factors enhanced their actions. For instance, many women noted that growing older, having grandchildren, and feeling responsibility for facilitating family connections compelled them to think about the legacies they would leave to future generations. Valuing their cultural heritage and responding to the interests of adult children and grandchildren encouraged women to share certain legacies. Participants passed on legacies situated in a particular sociohistorical time and influenced by individual development.

Legacies and Aging

Although most women emphasized the importance of passing down legacies, there was variation in how these women described their investments in such legacies and the activities they undertook to ensure that they happened. In this sample, there was wide variability in age (average = 76) with a range from 59 to 91 years. Most women (n = 17) were 75 years or older. Such wide ranges of ages reflected different positions in the life course. In many cases, the oldest women in the sample felt that they had already passed on their legacies to their families and that now it was, in turn, their children's responsibility to carry on such tasks. Other women, such as Louise, felt that they were too young to pass on certain family legacies. Louise exclaimed, "I don't feel that way but I probably am! I don't feel that way. That is the old ladies! I am only 71!"

For some women, advancing age focused attention on family legacies and what they had to pass on to others. Louise expressed some surprise as she talked about her aging process and the importance of passing on legacies. "I would never have thought so. And as time goes by, it becomes more and more and more so! Very important. I have realized what is happening. We have passed ourselves on to these children. We are not going to be here much longer." Carol, one of the youngest in the sample admitted that "yeah, as you are getting older, you start thinking about that."

Some women felt that their ability to pass on legacies had decreased and they expected their adult children to carry on these responsibilities. "There is

nothing more that you can do. It is in somebody's else's hand," admitted Martha. Dora, an 80-year-old grandmother who had just concluded a visit with her granddaughters before the start of the interview, felt that she was "getting too old now I think. As you see, though, I am still trying." Alice expressed her fear of increasing health problems as she aged. Referring to her family's request to teach them more about Armenian cooking, she exclaimed, "Pretty soon, I won't be able to do it!"

There were certain activities that all of the women performed to various degrees no matter their age. For instance, the two oldest women in the sample were very active in telling family members about family history and stories. They were happy that family members had taken the time to record many of their stories and indicated that more was to be done. Although the oldest women in the sample were not as active in coordinating family gatherings, they stressed how important it was for family members to get together. All participants continued to cook Armenian food for family members during select occasions and events. Two women with the greatest health challenges were still baking for family members and the church. They talked of teaching these skills to others.

Generational Position

Being part of the Omega generation encouraged women to take on more responsibilities for ensuring that family members were aware of family history and

stories. They also felt inclined to work actively to keep family members together. Ellen described this transmission of responsibilities when her mother died.

> And then when she passed on, I said, I'm not a little girl . . . that carried on. You just can't help it. You are still the child of that parent. I don't care what the age is. And then I said, well now I'm the matriarch of the family. That's how I looked at it. And I guess that makes it at least for me, who happens to be the responsible type, that you know, I have to carry out certain things here that are important to me.

This sense of responsibility was especially strong among those women who were the oldest surviving sibling. Anoush explained that her placement as the oldest sister in her family translated into her responsibility to keep family close. "I have kept the tradition more and I have kept very close to the family . . . .When we got married, every one of them [siblings] that made it into this country, they all stopped here and they made it from here wherever they were going. They felt safe." Alice, one of the oldest in the sample and with evident health problems, indicated that she felt responsible for her siblings and other family members who were younger. "I help them you know, I look out for them." These examples contrasted with those women who still had surviving older siblings, especially sisters. Sonia, a younger sibling, with older sisters and brothers still living described this difference. "As a matter of fact, it's so good because my older sister kind of mothers us right now. She comes and makes sure that everything is okay with everybody. I like that. I say, I'm glad you do that cause Mom isn't around so we can come to you."

Grandparenthood

Caring for children is often culturally reinforced across the lifespan for women (Thomas, 1995). Participants valued their transition into grandparenthood and mentioned grandchildren often in interviews. Twenty-six women had at least one grandchild and all described the importance of their relationships with them. Grandchildren were the natural recipients of many planned legacies. For instance, Armine reported her joy when her grandchildren expressed curiosity about the past. "They ask what we used to do. Tell us the stories that you used to tell Mommy!"

When contrasted with the four women without grandchildren, it was evident that grandchildren motivated women to think about legacies. For example, three women waited expectantly while one woman shared that she had no hope for grandchildren. She felt discouraged and resigned when thinking about legacies. "Well, there again, there aren't any. There are no grandchildren. Really, it's going to end with me. Really. I don't feel good or bad about this. It is just a given fact. I can't dwell on the idea that it ends with me. That's unfortunate but it's a fact . . . . I have gone as far as I can go."

Encouragement of Succeeding Generations

Women were encouraged to pass on certain legacies to family members as adult children and grandchildren desired to learn more about their Armenian heritage. Defined as symbolic ethnicity (Alba, 1990; Bakalian, 1993; Gans, 1979), researchers have suggested that descendents of immigrants who are firmly

established in the dominant culture may desire ethnic connection, yet invest little time in ethnic activities. Participants indicated that most of their adult children and grandchildren identified as American but were concerned with the symbols of Armenian ethnicity such as food, cultural events, and holiday celebrations.

Seda, Diane, and Eva all reported efforts undertaken by their adult children to ask questions, record stories, attend certain events, and spend time with older Armenians. Similar to some participants, adult children may have become more interested in their Armenian heritage as they aged and ethnic identity became more relevant. A few women reported delight when adult children called to ask for cooking advice and Armenian recipes. Melane and Lily described how their children expressed a desire to leave mainstream protestant churches and attend Armenian Churches, bringing their parents with them. In fact, Melane described how she actively discouraged her son from becoming a religious leader within the Armenian Church. "I didn't want him to. I wanted him to go into the American churches." It was her son's leadership in the church, however, that brought Melane back into Armenian community life. Jacqueline also described how at one point, her daughter grew weary of participating in parties where few Armenians were present. "She said, 'Mother, why don't you have your Armenian friends over?' So that kind of started where we went back into the Armenian fold."

Support of Church and Community

Some women felt that the only way they could pass on legacies was through the Church. Almost every description of how they worked to keep family members close to the Armenian culture included church activities required of their children when young and encouraged of their children when adults. Many knew that churches provided the support they needed in undertaking the more difficult job of keeping grandchildren ethnically identified as well. Zabel commented that her most fervent wish was that her grandchildren would "grow closer to our church," and Anoush declared that her grandchildren would definitely go to Armenian churches although her son was marrying a non-Armenian.

Women like Flora and Asniv were motivated to use the Church as a way to pass on legacies because of their own activities and choices as to how they liked to spend their time. As Doris explained, "I think all of my friends are Armenian that I run around with. Maybe, one or two that are not, that I see, once in a blue moon. And then, not really. Because my interest has always been with the church and the Armenian people." Religious participation, especially among women, increases with age (Levin, Taylor, & Chatters, 1994) and most of the women valued the church as a center for their leisure activities. The church was not only a place that children and grandchildren could learn both ritual and language, but also was a place that older women could spend time with family members.

Obstacles to Passing on Legacies

As participants described the legacies that they had both received and planned to give to family members, the women demonstrated the critical and precarious position they held in this intergenerational process of transmission. They represented, in many cases, the bridges between Old World and New World family experiences. The women were well aware that the sociohistorical context in which their children and grandchildren were now living differed greatly from their own. Tension and conflict arose as women portrayed how legacies anchored in ethnicity would be passed to family members.

Assimilation of Participants

Especially in the context of intermarriage and location within an ethnic community, assimilation processes determined how legacies were passed to families. The process of assimilation for both the women and their families exerted pressure either to forgo passing on certain legacies or to reshape them into things that family members would understand and use. Researchers have commented that during an ethnic group's early adjustment in a new country, family members express ambivalence as to their own cultural identity and its fit with the dominant culture around them (Alba, 1990). Eventually, many desire to move away from their own ethnic identity. Great variability exists in ethnic groups as they adapt to their new home countries: additionally, for all ethnic groups, family patterns and

experiences are influenced over time (Alba, 1990; Buriel & De Ment, 1997; Rumbaut, 1997).

Because the majority of women were not raised in the Armenian homeland, their ability to pass on specific legacies was shaped by assimilation processes. Participants who felt comfortable within both Armenian and American cultures had options as to how they expressed their identity. As O'Grady (1981) suggested, participants chose how strongly they wanted to be identified as Armenian or American and embraced those cultural symbols that expressed this identity. These choices influenced the types of ethnic family legacies women felt important to share with others. Some women, similar to Flora and Audrey, were influenced by their parents' emphasis on assimilation. Ellen commented on her father's words. "I always remember my father who was not born here, but who always told me you should create your environment so that you mix easily in the larger community and your own ethnic community. And you freely go back and forth. You are not jarred going from one to the other. And that's how it's been for me."

Other women commented on how they actively tried to assimilate in opposition to parental wishes and in hopes of fitting in with the dominant culture. Armenian American children of immigrants, for instance, experienced conflicting tensions between parents' emphasis on Armenian traditions and what they experienced outside of the home (Mirak, 1980). Carol shared how the actions of others motivated her desire to hide her ethnicity. "They would ask you what you were when I was a young girl. Armenian. They'd never heard that and they'd start

laughing at me. So, fine, I'm not going to tell anyone I'm Armenian." Doris shared how she went against her father's wishes to modify her first name into one that was easily understood and repeated by her American friends. Louise stressed her periodic resentment of her parents concerning their strong ethnic emphasis and the subsequent tension she felt between American and Armenian cultures. "Even though I resented [my mother] for some things, I guess. I don't know. You got those damn mixed feelings!" Jasmine described her assimilation into the American culture after arriving as a young girl from Lebanon. "I do think about that a lot. In fact, because I grew up in this country and trying to adapt to being American, it was always like it was kind of a conflict because you can't be both it seems to me. And I'm pretty much Americanized, I would say. I'm more American than Armenian."

A large number of women felt that their own ability to speak the language and replicate certain cultural activities was limited, which compounded their difficulties in sharing them with children and grandchildren. Some women described examples of their failed attempts to pass on the legacies of their parents through ritual and tradition. Betty shared how her husband encouraged her to stop speaking Armenian to her children because her command of the language was limited. He felt that their daughter would "get very confused." Diane shared how she attempted to start a family tradition of speaking Armenian during dinner. She soon abandoned her plan, however, when her children and husband began to make fun of her pronunciations. "He'd kind of made fun of the way I talked, and of

course, our younger son, he always made fun of everything. He was just a type of kid that you know, laughed at things. I gave it up."

Reflecting on their own assimilation, participants expressed how they missed parents and grandparents who could more completely share their legacies with future generations. Carol talked of her mother's early death and how her presence would have made a difference in the type and number of legacies passed on to her children. "I sometimes felt that I could offer them more and also, it would have helped if my mother was alive . . . because I am too Americanized and so it kind of washed out." Ana clearly noted the generational differences she observed in her family and others. "You know, each generation is changing a bit. I suppose I am not like my parents as they were. And here in the United States, the situation, the way of living, the style, it changes comparing Lebanon, for instance, to now."

Intermarriage of Children

Although they commented on their own assimilation, more often participants commented on the assimilation of their children and how this shaped the legacies they shared with them. Especially for those born in the United States, many women were reconciled to the fact that their children were more American than Armenian. They acknowledged that it was ultimately their adult children and grandchildren who would choose or not choose to accept certain legacies. In some cases, they felt their efforts would have little meaning to future generations. One woman commented that she no longer felt inclined to teach family members how to

cook Armenian food. "I can't pass these on to my daughters-in-law because they are all odars [non-Armenians], you see."

Women commonly identified the intermarriage of children as an impediment to passing on cultural legacies. Although most of the women self-identified strongly with the Armenian culture, a small proportion ($\underline{n} = 5$) had children who married only Armenians. More prevalent were reports of children marrying all non-Armenians ($\underline{n} = 15$) or some children within the same family marrying Armenians and some marrying non-Armenians ($\underline{n} = 10$). Participants knew that when children married non-Armenians family legacies linked to ethnicity were in jeopardy of being passed on to succeeding generations. Ana, who had two unmarried children and one son married to an American, felt that many of the things she hoped to pass on to family members were contingent on the marriages of her children. "It depends on the attitudes of the families in which they marry. From the mentality, from the education they got. It doesn't mean anything if they don't have any interests, any touch with our culture. We can't help."

Some women expressed sadness or even defeat when discussing intermarriages. Martha felt that intermarriages deterred certain legacies from being shared with family members. "Since these intermarriages, there's nothing more that you can really pass on. There's nothing here." Anahit felt that her son's marriage to a non-Armenian altered her family tremendously. "He got married and things changed. So now he kind of serves another family." Although her son had been married for three years, Anahit had difficulties talking about his marriage and

blamed it for her family's estrangement. Another woman expressed the chasm that developed in her household when her son married a non-Armenian. It has only been through repeated efforts of the new daughter-in-law that some acceptance has occurred.

Some participants felt responsible for their children's intermarriages. They felt their efforts were inadequate in ensuring that children felt strong connections to their Armenian heritage. Some participants, for instance, expressed regret at not sending children to Armenian schools or to activities where they could meet other young Armenian women and men. Hasmik described how her efforts fell short. "I'll be honest. I worked very hard to bring him up in the Armenian way. I tried everything . . . anyway, that is the best I could do. If he is happy, that is now fine with me. Maybe I have to get used to that [marriage to a non-Armenian]." Saddened by her daughter's intermarriage, Betty shared that she had expectations about her children's' marriages " . . . and I really wanted that, I have to say that." Many participants felt that intermarriages influenced children's interests in receiving legacies. One participant remarked, "I don't know if they are interested [ethnic legacies]. She married a non-Armenian, so did my son. So what can you do?"

Although women like Flora wished that children had married Armenians, they indicated that they had accepted these unions. They viewed intermarriage and assimilation of adult children and grandchildren as inevitable. Carol felt that it was extremely difficult to keep many older legacies intact due to intermarriage. "Some

of us probably choose to marry our own kind, but how many generations can you keep that going on for? Unless you're staying in a cloistered place but that's not here in this country."

When adult children intermarried, some women actively pursued ways to share certain legacies with their families. Anoush expressed her desire to bring her son's non-Armenian fiancée to church and to plant the seeds for church participation among future grandchildren. Lily and her husband decided to take their son and his non-Armenian wife on a trip to Armenia and were delighted that their daughter-in-law expressed strong interest in knowing more about the Armenian culture. Other women described how they had intentionally chosen certain activities they felt were important to share with grandchildren who were products of these intermarriages. Carol described an annual Easter celebration that she created for her granddaughters, which included eggs colored in the "old fashioned, Armenian way." Rose balanced some of her activities such as cooking certain foods and cultural events with her son-in-law's mother who encouraged Jewish traditions. Other women expressed their caution in pushing certain Armenian legacies so as not to alienate non-Armenian in-laws.

In some cases, women lessened their expectations of whether certain legacies would be passed on to family members. It appeared less critical, for instance, that grandchildren attend Armenian churches as long as they were "learning religion" or "marrying a Christian." Rather than basing marital expectations for children foremost on ethnicity, they emphasized children's marital

satisfaction. "So long as they are happy and they love who they married, that is the important thing." Commenting on her son's recent marriage, Carol explained the importance of marrying a good [italics added] person regardless of race or ethnicity.

> The nice thing is that you share the same language, the foods, the kinds of customs. Your Grandma and Grandpa are Armenian, you know. But it's not the end of the world. The most important thing is that you want your children to be happy. And if that's what it is, then that's fine. Because you know? Long time ago, they believed that if you married an Armenian that was the only way that you were going to have a successful marriage. Well, that's not true. There are a lot of horrible Armenians out there that turn out to be bums!

Choices and Characteristics of Adult Children

When children expressed interest and sought ways to feel connected to previous generations, women were motivated to pass on legacies. When adult children and grandchildren expressed little interest in these legacies, however, women were less inclined to share them. Some felt that certain legacies would "have little meaning," and were reticent to share legacies with children because they "never asked anything." Other women did not want to appear aggressive. Lily expressed this sentiment: "You know, if they have the desire fine, but if they don't have the desire then, you know, I'm not going to push it." Zabel stressed that "you can't impose it on them, you know." Shirley had a philosophical approach to this process. "Well, it's the life they live. And we are in such a culture now that everything is mixed in. You can't say you have to do this, you have to be an

Armenian through and through. Just whatever you choose, whoever you meet, that is going to be it." Later, she stressed that she had "planted the seeds," and hoped that her family members would value certain legacies in later generations.

Individual tastes and temperaments of children also influenced participants' desires to pass on certain legacies. Decisions as to whom received certain possessions, for instance, were predicated on whether children appeared interested and connected to Armenian culture. Additionally, some women indicated that some children were "not very sentimental" and showed little interest in receiving certain heirlooms. Other women hinted at rewarding those children who had expressed interest by bequeathing particular items or sharing specific stories. When asked about valued possessions, Martha declared that she was only giving certain things to one daughter. "She is the only one who wants them. Rachel couldn't much care really." Women were also reticent to pass certain Armenian legacies on to children who were not full Armenian. Alice explained that her one granddaughter would inherit many of the objects she had that were Armenian. "She is Armenian. Her father is Armenian as well as my daughter [the child's mother]. I think she is more interested in Armenians."

Geographic Isolation

By virtue of age and family immigration patterns, some women encountered geographic isolation from other Armenians early in their lives. Melane's family came to the United States before the Genocide occurred. As the oldest woman in

the sample, she detailed how few Armenians were around her when she was growing up and later. In her recollections, she could only remember one Armenian who lived nearby. Lack of access to other Armenians influenced her ability to pass on certain legacies to her family.

Geographic distance from either family or Armenian communities when participants were adults also acted as an impediment to passing down legacies to family members. Women who grew up in Armenian communities found that their move to California heavily influenced intergenerational transmission. Martha and her husband lived far away from her family whom she described as close and connected. Once she arrived in California, however, she felt alone. "We were not very close [geographically] to our parents. Once we were established, ourselves as an individual family, then that was it." As a result, Martha felt that she had "little to pass on." Madeline felt that if she had remained in the Midwest, her children would have more connections to family and their Armenian heritage. "If I was back there, we would have done things more with family, but I don't have family here. It makes a difference." Because of the inaccessibility to Armenian institutions, Diane felt that she was less inclined to share certain legacies with her children and, as a consequence, they were "not real dedicated Armenians."

Marital disruption also influenced legacies in a variety of ways. Three women moved away from Armenian ethnic communities and their own personal ethnic identities after experiencing marital disruptions of divorce or widowhood. Legacies anchored to ethnicity were influenced by changes in social support and

the geographic distance from Armenian communities, as well as the absence of Armenian husbands.

Legacies and the Sociohistorical Context

Participants recognized that there were differences between when they received family legacies and when they planned to pass legacies on to family members. Women expressed displeasure, in some cases, that societal pressures competed with their ability to pass on certain legacies. "What are you going to do? It's like potluck or chicken soup, or I don't know. It's got everything. Or vegetable soup. Everything's going to be thrown in and they're going to pick what they want. You're not going to guide them." Armine felt that society at large would exert the heaviest influence on her grandchildren's connections to previous generations. "I don't know how it will be in society. If they will be proud of being Armenian or maybe they want people to ignore it or they don't want people to know that they are Armenians. It depends on how society looks on them."

Because participants viewed the intergenerational transmission of legacies from a gendered perspective, many of the legacies women wished to share centered on women's traditional work in the household. Skills that participants learned from their mothers and grandmothers, in particular, were delineated as important to pass on to kin. Many women sentimentalized the time spent in learning these skills from their women family members and expressed how they wanted to recreate these

experiences with grandchildren. They identified activities and possessions that focused on cooking, doing needlework, and organizing family gatherings.

When asked about the types of things she did with her granddaughter, Jasmine demonstrated this emphasis on gendered activity.

> I am trying to be for her a really good role model, 'Good Gran,' the real old country grandmother type that should be like when she comes over, I teach her how we make pilaf and sarma and I teach her to cook. When she was young, we'd start baking at a very young age. So then, that gradually led up to other dishes and things that she likes to do. So we cook together and I show her how to clean things or mend things or knit things. You know that type of stuff.

Armenoui described how she wanted to share her knowledge of food and hospitality with her daughters and daughters-in-law. "Food is very important for Armenian men. We have to feed them. They don't do. My husband helps now but we were brought up like that, to entertain them, to bring the food, to put it on the table. Because they were the moneymakers, they earned the money. So, it was our job."

A number of women expressed tension, however, when describing their desire to teach family members how to cook. Although two women mentioned teaching their sons how to cook Armenian meals, women were more likely to express the importance of such instruction with daughters and granddaughters. Some felt hurt that daughters and granddaughters did not value these activities. Others wished they had daughters and granddaughters to whom they could teach certain activities such as needlework and cooking. One woman emphasized that her ability to pass down legacies would have differed "if I had had a daughter."

Lack of time was implicated as the reason that many adult children and grandchildren were unable to receive legacies, although some women hinted that these excuses might have masked a lack of appreciation for legacies. These differences also illustrated changes in work patterns and family leisure time between generations. One of the oldest women in the sample, Alice, felt a great sense of loss that she could not pass on her cooking expertise to her family. "They all say that they want me to teach them how to make the grape leaves but somehow or another, they haven't had the time." Betty commented on how few young people come to her church. "I have to say, they don't come that often 'cause they work. Half the time they are working and everything, which is sad." She added that she thought her children's generation is "gonna be a little lost" because they did not have the time to experience those things that were connected to the Armenian culture. Lily felt that the current generations faced different challenges in their lives. "We grew up in the country and you don't have, you don't have access to a lot of things like the city life. We did things like handwork, cooking. I was trying to teach the grandchildren how to sew the other day. If they were closer, we'd, you could teach them more. But they're also very active in everything that's going on. She [their mother] keeps them busy all the time."

Armenoui suggested that women's changing work patterns meant that more time was spent outside of the household rather than within it. These changes, then, were seen as partially responsible for the distance between succeeding generations and their family legacies. "If the mother has to work, we change. Adapt. So you

have to adapt. What can you do?" Although a large number of women in this sample worked for pay outside of the home, they identified first as wives and mothers and downplayed their paid work activities. This was consistent with Rubin's (1979) observation that women, in the older cohorts represented in this sample, have difficulties distinguishing between their involvement in paid labor activities outside of the home and their family work inside of the home. For participants, paid work was performed to ensure family economic survival and personal identity was primarily based on their unpaid work in the context of family life.

Summary

Consistent with Erikson's (1950) emphasis on commitment to future generations through generativity, the older Armenian American mothers in this study were concerned about and active in passing legacies on to children and grandchildren. Participants expressed cultural generativity, in particular, where they sought to preserve cultural symbols to be passed on to family members (Kotre, 1984). Not only were participants interested in passing on certain legacies received from relatives, they also created and shaped legacies of their own.

The legacies of older Armenian women focused on two paramount goals: (a) the transmission of family cohesion to future generations, and (b) the transmission of ethnic identity to future generations. Due to their own assimilation processes, the absence of older family members, and ability to selectively embrace

certain cultural symbols, participants varied on how they emphasized certain legacies, particularly those anchored to ethnicity. Participants were motivated to pass on legacies and many actively sought ways that children and grandchildren could continue to have exposure to and be encouraged to invest in Armenian family experiences and cultural activities. Through these experiences, women felt that legacies would be appreciated and received. Because they realized that a variety of forces influenced family members' receptivity to and interest in legacies, women used strategies to keep families close.

Participants expressed some tension and conflict when attempting to pass legacies on to family members. Some women considered certain legacies to hold little value for succeeding generations. In many cases, women had to reshape and redefine certain legacies in hopes that succeeding generations would value them. Accepting the life choices of adult children and grandchildren, which included marrying non-Armenians, living outside of Armenian communities, attending other churches, or spending time in different leisure activities, predicted how strongly women held on to expectations concerning legacies. Ultimately, these older mothers were active agents in what they hoped would be the legacies received and remembered by future generations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The activities and behaviors of family members change over time as older family members die and new ones come of age. In the midst of change, however, families maintain continuity through the intergenerational transmission of legacies. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how older mothers transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members and to understand whether and how ethnic histories influenced this process. This study focused on legacies received and shared within Armenian American families through the perspective of 30 older mothers. The study began from a desire to learn more about intergenerational relationships and the links individual family members forge between older and newer members across time.

Study Findings

Through their identification of both the legacies they received from their families and the legacies they hoped to share with succeeding generations, the older Armenian American mothers in this study articulated a broad definition of family legacies. These legacies were both material, such as a certain valued possession, as well as symbolic, such as the emphasis on survival found in family Genocide stories. As described by participants, legacies expressed particular family meanings as they were passed from one generation to the next. Family legacies helped participants articulate family identities that were created, in part, through the

experiences of their older family members and ancestors, as well as significant family events. Participants served as the active link for many of the intergenerational transmissions in their families by providing succeeding generations with information about family culture and ethnic roots. Participants also demonstrated how the types and meanings of family legacies changed over time, depending on the way each legacy was shaped and was received among family members.

A life course perspective focuses attention on how change over time reflects both developmental and historical influences (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Hareven, 1994; Moen, 1996). This perspective provided the overarching framework for this study. It illuminated how family members received a unique set of legacies situated in a particular sociohistorical time and influenced by individual development.

Individual experiences and life course transitions, larger sociohistorical influences, and the gendered construction of family life influenced the legacies evident in this study. Participants came from families directly affected by the Armenian Genocide. These families experienced critical losses that included the deaths of family members, the destruction of homes, and the forced relocation to other countries. The Armenian Genocide pushed families to alter their patterns and activities and shaped the legacies family members received in its aftermath. As suggested by scholars, Genocide and its shadow continued to influence succeeding generations (Miller & Miller, 1992). Parents, grandparents, and other individuals

shared Genocide stories with participants in ways that had implications for their understanding of their own family's history and ethnic roots.

The Genocide also influenced the construction and form of legacies. Women emphasized those legacies that symbolized connection to family, underscored family cohesion, and accentuated Armenian culture. As suggested in previous studies (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Dittmar, 1992; Kamptner, 1991; Sherman, 1991; Wapner et al., 1990), when possessions were present, participants valued family photographs and other items that represented connections to family members. Because families lost most of their physical possessions during this time, however, participants had few valued possessions and appeared to place little emphasis on them. Legacies that were identified more frequently focused on ritual, activities, and family stories. Family Genocide stories emerged as a critical legacy that many women received from parents and planned to pass on to family members. Ethnic activities and rituals that included cooking, family celebrations and gatherings, religious participation, and service to others were also received and valued by participants. These legacies underscored the importance of survival, ethnic pride, and family cohesion. By facilitating connection to the Armenian culture, legacies were also avenues for subsequent generations, immersed in the dominant culture, to experience symbolic ethnicity (Alba, 1990; Bakalian, 1993).

Consistent with Erikson (1950), participants were generative, expressing care for succeeding generations and interest in passing on legacies. The women

expressed cultural generativity, in particular, as they sought to preserve and pass on cultural symbols to family members (Kotre, 1984). In many cases, participants wanted to continue the legacies they had received from their families. These interests appeared to increase with age and generational status. As they became members of the oldest living generations in their families and as they experienced grandparenthood, participants were motivated to pass on legacies to other family members. Many participants were also interested in passing on legacies that enabled family members to stay connected to Armenian cultural experiences and ethnic identity. The ability and desire to pass on certain ethnic legacies, however, were influenced by participants' ethnic identity and assimilation. When younger family members expressed interest in particular legacies and when Armenian organizations such as churches provided support, women were likely to share legacies with others.

Conflict and tension arose, however, when mothers attempted to pass on certain legacies. Women recognized how much the context in which they received legacies differed from the context in which they hoped to pass legacies on to family members. Expectations as to what legacies would be valued by future generations were influenced by the assimilation of participants and of their children. When adult children had infrequent contact with ethnic communities, attended other churches, or married non-Armenians, mothers expressed more difficulties in passing on certain legacies. Women considered some legacies to hold little value for succeeding generations such as cooking Armenian food or learning Armenian

religious practices. In some cases, older mothers felt inadequate to share legacies compared to previous generations. A few women actively rejected legacies that were anchored to ethnicity.

Women described the legacies they hoped to share within the context of motherhood. Consistent with other research, they wanted future generations to remember them as caring mothers and they placed great emphasis on the importance of Armenian family life (Bakalian, 1993; O'Grady, 1981; Pattie, 1995). They associated legacies with the responsibilities that women typically performed in households such as cooking, sewing, and planning family gatherings. Women commonly identified daughters and granddaughters to be the recipients of many of their legacies reflecting the importance of this bond across the life course (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). As Di Leonardo (1987) suggested, these women also performed kinkeeping tasks to ensure that family members stayed connected and to provide experiences where ethnic legacies could be shared. Women worked hard to ensure that legacies would be received, valued, and remembered by future generations.

Limitations

Sample

A purposive sample was drawn for this study. Because the participants were recruited through religious organizations or key informants, study findings are not

representative and, consequently, are not generalizable to the entire population of older adult Armenian American mothers. As seen in other studies, due to their participation in culturally specific organizations, many of the Armenian women who participated in this study expressed strong ethnic identities (Bakalian, 1993).

Although limiting, the use of purposive sampling is justified. My challenge in recruiting a sample concerned access. Key informants are critical for identifying participants, providing knowledge of communities, and giving sanction to the research project. Because I reside outside of this geographic area and have a multiethnic identity, I was sensitive to potential perceptions as to my role as researcher. Using key informants and snowball sampling methods, I was able to develop trust and rapport, critical in qualitative methodologies (Janesick, 1998) and important when conducting research with ethnic populations (Berg, 1995).

I was also concerned with identifying older women who identified as Armenian American. Patton (1987) emphasized the value of purposive sampling when seeking information-rich participants for qualitative studies. By interviewing women who were involved in Armenian Churches and who had strong ethnic identities, I was able to target participants involved in the transmission of legacies, especially those connected to Armenian culture.

Another limitation concerned the sample size. A qualitative methodology is necessary to study individual and social situations that are unique, complex, and relatively unknown (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Rowles & Reinharz, 1988). This study addresses issues where relatively little research exists and utilizes participants

who are often overlooked in research due to age, gender, and ethnicity. Although the sample is small, this research provides the opportunity to conduct an in-depth, systematic exploration of how older mothers receive, shape, and pass on legacies to family members. By using a qualitative methodology, I was able to focus on the meanings older mothers assign to their experiences (Berg, 1995) and to understand more fully the context in which these meanings are assigned (Guba & Lincoln, 1998).

The women in this study volunteered to participate. Those women who were less likely to participate may have differed from study participants. For instance, women who participated in this study may have been more likely to identify as Armenian and may have more positive relations with adult children and grandchildren compared to those women who did not participate. Although present in the study, women who were less likely to identify as Armenian may have been underrepresented in the sample. Given the small number of women participating in this study, however, I made efforts to introduce variability. Participants expressed variability in ethnic identification, family experiences of Genocide, and assimilation processes. Participants also demonstrated variability in ages, social context, and family structure. Women ranged in age from 59 to 91, lived in Armenian and non-Armenian communities, and had different commitments to the Armenian Church and religious participation. The marital and parental status of the women varied as well. Participants were married, widowed, or divorced. The number and gender of children also varied among participants. These differences

helped in understanding how unique sociohistorical context and individual's life course influenced the type and meaning of legacies.

Unit of Analysis

In studies of family relationships, it may be important to understand family issues as experienced by more than one family member (Bernard, 1972). Because the focus of this study was on how older mothers receive and pass on legacies, I obtained no information from husbands, adult children, siblings, or other relatives and had no way of knowing the intended legacies of deceased family members. Family history was described solely through the eyes of one person. Their narratives were dependent, in part, on their ability to recall stories and events. Participant knowledge was also dependent on what the women were told by family members and what their family members experienced. Additionally, family stories and other legacies were shaped by individual interpretations of past family events. In some cases, they may have changed over time and across generations as they were redefined into stories that had meanings other than what may have been intended in the first telling (Bamberger, 2000). Nevertheless, as Thomas & Thomas (1928) have written, "if men [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (p. 572). Stories passed on to the next generation had real consequences in terms of shaping family history and legacies, regardless of whether all the details were factually accurate.

Analytical Process

In many qualitative studies, researchers utilize additional investigators to read and code transcripts to check the validity of particular categories. In this study, I did not have a second rater. Morse (1998) argued effectively that bringing a second rater into a research process during coding may actually affect the study negatively. She suggested that the primary investigator has a cumulative and broad knowledge base from conducting the interviews to which the second rater does not have access. Instead, I extended careful effort to ensure that a rigorous research methodology was employed.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

Through an emphasis on family legacies, intergenerational relationships and the persistence and transformation of family culture over time are illuminated. Certain types of legacies such as family stories, rituals, activities, and possessions deserve further attention and may help us understand more fully the mechanisms that aid these intergenerational transmissions.

A systematic exploration focused on how family members give meaning to and pass on legacies would contribute to the literature. A multigenerational study would help us understand a variety of issues regarding legacies. Additional family perspectives may help illuminate the types and meanings of family legacies. Although participants in this study were forthcoming about the painful legacies they received regarding the Genocide, many participants were silent about other

negative family legacies that they may have received from parents or shared with younger family members. In part because this study focused on legacies and older mothers, participants spent little time, additionally, discussing the ways that husbands were involved in passing on certain family legacies.

A multigenerational study would also aid in understanding the generational dissonance that may occur when family members attempt to pass on a legacy within a sociohistorical culture that is different from the one in which the legacy was received. Data from older parents with their adult children would aid in understanding whether and how legacies are transmitted. It could demonstrate how each family member is the interpreter of how legacies are received and reshaped.

Some family legacies, such as the Armenian Genocide experience in this study, are transmitted despite efforts to hide these stories. Other family legacies are transmitted minimally or with little explanation or information. Not hearing the family Genocide experience influenced participants' understanding of family meanings and their knowledge of family history. This outcome has implications for succeeding generations of families in which historical events have dramatically influenced family behavior and experiences. Intergenerational research may help in understanding the consequences of sharing or not sharing family historical experiences across generations.

What women chose as legacies and how they acted on these choices reflected their desire to be remembered within the context of motherhood. These choices were influenced, additionally, by the ethnic identities of participants and

their own assimilation into dominant American culture. Tension arose for some older mothers who knew that certain legacies would not be valued due to assimilation of adult children, changing constructions of family and paid work, and shifting patterns of marriage and childbearing. A three-generation study would provide a window into the ways that sociohistorical influences shape legacies in families.

Finally, defined populations who suffer genocide, such as the Armenians in this study, experience radical shifts in the continuity of family experience over time. Many ethnic populations have been forced to relocate from their communities and homelands to the United States and other countries because of such events. When genocide occurs, families lose their storytellers and those who remain often have difficulty passing family legacies on to their children. Complementing work currently focused on Jewish families and the Holocaust, new studies may illuminate how families cope with tragedy and express resiliency through the legacies they pass on to future generations. Dilworth-Anderson, Burton, & Johnson (1993) emphasized how themes of survival were evident in African American cultural literature. These stories are instructive in understanding how ethnic families construct cultural identities. An examination of family legacies, such as the family Genocide stories shared in Armenian families, may also provide insight into the ways that families construct and express ethnic identity within the context of a dominant culture.

It may also be important to compare ethnic families who have immigrated to new countries under varying circumstances. For instance, are certain valued possessions emphasized when ethnic families are forced to leave home countries or when they move voluntarily for economic reasons? Does the motivating force for immigration affect the importance placed on legacies anchored to ethnicity? How are legacies shaped and what ethnic legacies, if any, remain when families are assimilated into the dominant culture of adopted countries?

Conclusion

This study illustrates that historical events have an important and lasting influence on family legacies and subsequent family activities. The themes and patterns of legacies identified provided the opportunity for understanding how families transmit meanings regarding family identity, culture, and ethnicity. Researchers have suggested that older adults are concerned with future generations (Erikson, 1950; Kotre, 1984; McAdams, de St. Aubin, & Logan, 1993; McAdams, Hart, & Maruna, 1998). Legacies passed across generations require an integrated perspective that incorporates individual life course development, family transitions, and historical events (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Hareven, 1994). Although family members describe legacies and place importance on many types of intergenerational transmissions, there is little research on legacies (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). This qualitative study increased understanding regarding how generations

are linked, how these linkages are made through legacies, and how individual family members ensure that these linkages hold fast.

Regardless of the desire and intent of family members, family legacies change. Some legacies are valued while others are rejected. A telling incident occurred when the daughter of a participant was present during an interview. The daughter expressed her delight in learning that a piece of her great-grandmother's handwork existed and was kept in her mother's bedroom. She interrupted the flow of the interview to ask questions as to its origin and its use. She urged her mother to locate the item and to show it to her immediately. As I watched the mother's reaction, I could see that she had placed little value on this item and was uncertain as to its exact location. The daughter marveled that she had a remnant of her great-grandmother's needlework and remarked how close she felt to this relative because of their shared interest in sewing. This interaction illustrated the dynamic process legacies play in families and the differential value placed on them by succeeding generations. This piece of handwork also told a larger story. Because it was given to the participant's father before he left Turkey and shortly before his mother's death during the Genocide, this possession represented one of the few physical reminders that linked this family to preceding generations. Conversations with participants confirmed the influence on families of larger historical events, even in the passing of possessions to the next generation.

The women in this study illustrate the diverse ways that older mothers receive, shape, and pass on legacies to family members. Although they valued their

parents' legacies differentially, they emphasized the importance of family and strong kin connections across generations. They expressed interest in passing on legacies to succeeding generations and worked actively to ensure that particular legacies would be received and remembered. Their stories highlight the importance of family legacies as vehicles to understanding how families maintain continuity and change over time within a sociohistorical context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Sample Letter to Churches and Organizations

Date
Name
Title
Address

Dear _____:

I am writing to ask your help with a project I am doing as part of my work as a graduate student. I am a Ph.D. candidate in Human Development and Family Studies at Oregon State University and a native Californian with Armenian roots in Fresno, California and the San Francisco Bay Area. During the course of my studies, I have become interested in learning about older women and their experiences within families. I would like to understand more about how older mothers may transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members. For instance, older women may share family stories or pass on certain recipes to their family members. I am especially interested in whether ethnic histories influence the passing on of family stories and meanings to younger family members. To do this, I plan to interview Armenian American women.

I seek to interview Armenian American mothers who represent the oldest living generation of their families. Each woman will be interviewed for approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours and in a place and time comfortable and convenient to her. The answers to all interview questions will be confidential.

I will be calling you within the next two weeks to hear your suggestions as to the best ways I may pursue my project. I anticipate that you will have much to share with me including how I might reach older Armenian women who may be interested in participating in this study. I would be willing to make group presentations, write an article for a newsletter or other bulletin, or follow-up in another way you may suggest. If needed, I can also provide letters from my supervising professors and Armenian community members who support me in this endeavor.

I am excited about this project and look forward to talking with you soon. If you have any questions or concerns and would like to get in touch with me sooner, I can be reached at (541) 757-0580 or by email at manoogim@ucs.orst.edu.

Thank you for your help.

Margaret Manoogian-O'Dell
2366 NW Maser Drive
Corvallis, OR 97330

Appendix B
Informed Consent Form

Project Title: The Legacies of Older Mothers: A Qualitative Study

Investigators: Margaret Manoogian-O'Dell, Ph.D. Candidate: Leslie Richards, Professor; and Alexis Walker, Professor.

Purpose of the Project: This project will explore how older mothers transmit family meanings, history, and culture to family members. Armenian American and American women will be interviewed to better understand whether ethnic histories influence older mothers' activities regarding the passing on of family meanings.

The results from this research will provide information on how older mothers create legacies as well as identify potential issues regarding the passing down of legacies to family members.

Procedures: I understand as a participant in this study that I will be asked a series of questions in an interview format that will last approximately 1.5 to 2 hours in duration. With my permission, the interview will be audiotaped.

In addition, I understand:

*The information I give will be kept private and confidential. My answers to the questions will be identified only by number. My name will not be used in any way.

*My responses, together with others, will be combined and used for summaries only.

*I do not have to participate in this project. If I decide that I do not want to answer some questions, that is okay. At any time, I may choose not to participate in this study.

*If I have questions about the research study, I can contact Margaret Manoogian-O'Dell at 757-0580. Any other questions that I have should be directed to Sponsored Programs Officer, OSU Research Office, (541) 737-0670.

My signature below indicates that I understand the Legacies of Older Mothers Research Project and agree to participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this form.

Participant's Signature	Name of Participant
Participant's Address	Participant's Phone Number

Appendix C
Participant Profile

1. Where were you born? _____.
2. (If non-U.S.) How long have you lived in the United States? _____.
3. When were you born? _____.
4. How many years did you go to school? _____.
5. What is your current marital status? _____.
6. If you are married, how long have you been married? _____.
7. Is this your first marriage? _____. If not, please describe your marital history.

   _____

   _____.

8. Have you ever worked outside of the home? _____. If so, what did you do?

   _____

   _____.

9. Please tell me about your children and their ages:

   _____

   _____

   _____.

10. What letter most closely represents your 1999 income?

    A. Less than $10,000

    B. $10,000 to $19,999

    C. $20,000 to $29,999

D. $30,000 to $39,999

E. $40,000 to $49,999

F. $50,000 to $75,000

G. $75,000 to $100,000

H. Over $100,000

Appendix D
Interview Protocol Questions

1. Tell me about your family and its history?
   Probes: How would you describe your family? What, if anything, makes your family special or unique?

2. Do you have an object or item in your possession that you consider to be a valued possession or that has special family meaning for you?

   What is it? Tell me all about it.
   Probes:
   a) Describe the item?
   b) When was it acquired?
   c) How did you acquire it?
   d) What meaning does this item have for you?
   e) What other memories do you have of this item? (i.e., is it representative of an activity that you shared with another person? Part of a family memory?) Describe.
   f) When/how have you used it?
   g) Who owned it before you?
   h) Whom might you want to give it to and when would you like to give it?
   i) Why do you want to give it to this person?

   Repeat for additional possessions.

3. (If not already mentioned) What are some other types of things that were passed on to you by family members that you intend to pass on to others?
   Probes: stories, activities, items, recipes, etc.

4. If so, what is its meaning?

5. Why do you want to pass it on to that family member?

6. Every family has some stories that may be painful or may be seen as negative or uncomfortable. Do these stories get passed on to your family members? Why or why not?

7. How do you think your cultural background has shaped who you are?

8. Are there specific things that you feel are important to pass on to your family regarding your cultural heritage?

9. Do you feel a responsibility to pass on "culture" or "ethnicity" to your family? Why or why not?

10. Are there specific things that you do to preserve your cultural or ethnic heritage in your family?

11. What types of specific activities do you do that will ensure that your ethnic culture will be passed on to your family (e.g., holidays, traditions, events)?

12. You represent the oldest living link in your family. Do you feel any responsibilities with this position? What, if any? Do you do anything special because of this position?

13. Projecting into the future, what do you want your descendents to know or remember about the family from which they come?

14. Projecting into the future, what do you want your family members to know or remember about you?

15. Can you think of anything else you'd like to tell me about or you think I should know about?

16. Do you have any questions for me?